

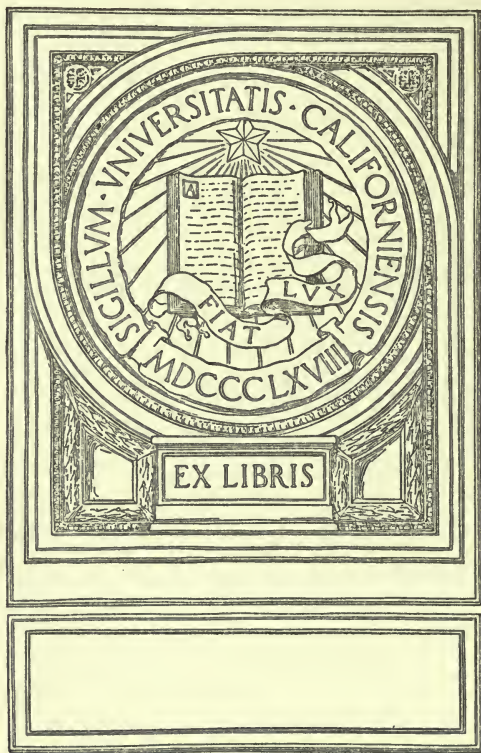
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Guido H. Stempel

Bloomington, Ind

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56 ERASMUS (Desiderius, 1467-1536, scholar, editor of the first published edition of the New Testament in Greek) AUTOGRAPH INSCRIPTION ON THE TITLE OF A BOOK.

At foot of title Erasmus has written, in a clear and steady hand, but with quite characteristic forms of the letters:

* "Sum Erasmi, nec muto dñm." [*I belong to Erasmus, and I do not change my master*].

He gave the book to a friend, who has written:

"Fui Erasmi, et mutavi dñm." [*I belonged to Erasmus, and I have changed my master*].

Below this Erasmus has written, in the straggling hand so characteristic of him:

"Iure vño mutavi, cū amicus sit alter ipse" [*I did right to change, since a friend is a second self*].

The book is one of exceptional interest in connection with the great editor of the Greek Testament, FOR IT CONTAINS THE FIRST CONSIDERABLE PORTION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT PRINTED IN GREEK. It is the Aldine edition of the *Carmina* of GREGORY OF NAZIANZEN, 4°, Venice, 1504.

The Greek text is accompanied by a Latin translation, but Aldus so printed them as to allow of the two languages being issued separately: this involved leaving blank the two inner pages of each gathering of the Latin translation: on these Aldus started to print the Greek text of St. John's Gospel with a Latin version, but only reached ch. vi., v. 58. At the end of the book is a note that the rest of the Gospel would be printed in the Latin translation of Nonnus, which however was never carried out.

GOOD COPY, with the four unsigned leaves at end. A few leaves margined. From the collection of Michael Wodhull, who notes (under date Mar: 23rd, 1770) "L: Davis's sale. 7/6, mending and binding 14/-.
1: 1: 6." Diced russia gilt, gilt edges. £30

THE RISE OF ENGLISH CULTURE



THE
RISE OF ENGLISH CULTURE.

BY

EDWIN JOHNSON, M.A.

AUTHOR OF

"THE RISE OF CHRISTENDOM," "THE PAULINE EPISTLES,"
"ANTIQUA MATER," ETC.

"I have thought that HISTORY was the one thing lacking to the glory of your Kingdom of England."

POLYDORUS VERGIL of Urbino, Archdeacon of Wells, to Henry VIII.,
in Preface to "Anglica Historia," London, August, 1533.

"The love of my Country compriseth all love in it."

WILLIAM CAMDEN, "Britannia."

WITH A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR AND
HIS WRITINGS

WILLIAMS AND NORSGATE
14, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON
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1904

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TO THE
MANAGER

To

THE HON. SIR NORMAND MACLAURIN,
M.A., M.D., LL.D.,
CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY,

THIS WORK IS
DEDICATED.

M188879

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

IN offering this new Introduction to English History to the public, I would call attention to the words rendered from Polydore Vergil, which I have placed on the title-page of the volume. For the first time since the Revival of Letters, I have endeavoured to state the mere matter of fact concerning the manner in which our national story was first schemed in the monasteries, and gradually published to the external world during the reign of Henry VIII. It may save my readers the tedium of long explanations or apologies if I simply say that the contents of my work may be regarded as a series of comments on, and illustrations of, the Preface of the first scholar of known personality who undertook to write the history of our country since the old Roman time.

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EDWIN JOHNSON AND HIS WRITINGS.

I.

As this is the first volume of the author's works to be issued since his decease, it has been thought fitting that it should be prefaced by some account of his life and writings.

Edwin Johnson was the second son of the Rev. Alfred Johnson, Congregational Minister, and was born at Upton, near Andover, Hampshire, on the 9th November, 1842. If he had any pride of birth, it was in the fact that his descent was from English yeoman stock. His childhood was spent in the country, and he never lost his love for its charms and associations. A studious and thoughtful boy, he read English history with delight, was proud of his country's greatness, and ambitiously hoped that some day he would be in a position to do something for it. Inheriting an old-fashioned courtesy of manner and a very chivalric spirit, he had but a poor opinion of money and the position it is supposed to give. His home influences were, however, rather of a Puritan cast, and under the serene guidance of his parents he drifted, scarcely knowing how or why, towards the Pulpit.

In 1859 he entered New College, St. John's Wood, to train for the Ministry, his tutors being the Rev. Dr. Halley; Dr. William Smith, editor of the Classical and

Bible Dictionaries ; Dr. Lankester, the chemist ; the Rev. John Godwin, Dr. Samuel Newth, and Professor Nenner. He won three Scholarships, took his M.A. degree in Classics at the London University ; and years afterwards the aged Dr. (then Sir William) Smith wrote of him as one of the most distinguished pupils he ever had. Of his collegiate career a lifelong friend writes :—

“ His contemporaries would agree that he easily distanced them in any mental contest which he undertook ; while his courtesy, refinement, and quiet humour endeared him to them all as a friend and comrade. He did not possess the *élan* and force of expression which would have commanded popularity ; but he had in debate, in preaching, and in conversation a rare and delicate skill in exhibiting some of the most charming sides of truth ; and with quiet sarcasm he used to expose some of the popular shams and delusions of the religious world. Few men were so deeply loved and respected at College as Edwin Johnson ; for while he was always an original and daring thinker, he never willingly wounded the susceptibilities of those who differed with him.”

He entered upon his first pastoral charge at Forest Hill, near London, in 1865. There he married and remained some years. His father-in-law's health breaking down, he went a tour with him on the Continent, visiting France, Switzerland, North Italy, and Germany. On their return in 1870, Johnson accepted a call to Boston, Lincolnshire, where he was settled for nine years. This was a very active period. Carefully fulfilling his pastoral duties, he yet found time for writing and lecturing on important topics of the day, taking especial interest in the question of National Education. It was in Boston that Johnson began to make his excursions and explorations into the beginnings of history. Among

his unpublished manuscripts are "An Ancient History in Anecdote," and a monograph on "St. Beowulph's." Of the same period are Essays on "Hebrew Poetry," and on the "Science of Religion." While at Boston he also edited Erasmus for the eminent bibliophile Robert Roberts, printer of an edition of the "Utopia." The "Apophthegmes," with a memoir of Erasmus by Johnson, issued in 1877, was followed by the "Colloquies" in 1878. To the latter Johnson added nearly one hundred pages of judicious and accurate notes. "No one," a critic wrote, "could complain that they were in excess, the work could scarcely have been better done"—a remark applicable to all his work, which is characterized by thoroughness and by conscientiousness. He was never influenced by any hasty desire of seeing his writing in print.

Meanwhile, he continued his studies of Classical, especially Greek literature, and read extensively in other branches. His own library—never a large one—was that of a poor scholar whose books are chosen for use, well-thumbed and annotated. Among his favourite authors were Horace, Seneca, Diogenes Laertius, Erasmus, Lessing, Wordsworth, Scott, Jane Austen, and Browning. The "Waverley Novels," he once told me, he had read through at least a dozen times; the volumes of the double-column edition were always at hand, and in later years helped him through many a sleepless night. His own clear style owes not a little to his favourite Scott.

In 1879 he was appointed Professor of Classical Literature by the Council of his College, and returned to London. This engagement enabled him to devote much more time to study and research: henceforward he became a constant worker at the British Museum

and at Dr. Williams's Library in Gordon Square, both being within easy walk of his residence at Primrose Hill. Greek Mythology and Philosophy, as well as Greek Ecclesiastical History, were subjects taken up to fortify his position at the College. These he studied deeply, and upon some of them wrote elaborately. His published literary work during this period included translations of Ewald on the Psalms, Meyer on the Romans, and a variety of miscellaneous articles and papers. He also gave considerable attention to patristic literature, and other branches of theological study. A glance at the list of his writings during these years gives a fair indication of the very wide range of his reading and of his great industry; while their perusal shows that he had acquired at the same time a facility and lucidity in expressing his ideas on learned and abstruse subjects. His attainments in Latin and Greek were those of a master; a good French and German scholar, he also became familiar with Oriental literature.

He had, moreover, a singular aptitude for teaching, and was able to invest the study of history with a living interest. Dr. Furnivall, who frequently met Johnson, thought him one of the most pregnant-minded and stimulating thinkers he had come across; he noticed his singularly attractive and genial manner, and the breadth and depth of his culture. The College work was more than congenial, but the Council, for pecuniary considerations, removing the Arts Department to University College, Gower Street, Johnson, after eight years of professorial work, was left free to devote his whole attention to literary pursuits. His works on "Greek Mythology and Religion," and on "The Origin and Process of Religion" were soon completed, though not published. Another work was

the translation of a collection of South German Folk-Tales, "In the Land of Marvels," issued as a companion volume to the North German "Fairy and Household Tales" of the brothers Grimm. The preface to this work afforded its translator and editor an opportunity for writing an interesting article on Folk-Lore, and of criticising the so-called "Nature Mythologists," whose opinions he considered were based on a radical mistake, presenting in their result an inversion of the truth.

4 In Patristic studies he had taken a bolder course than is usually pursued by an orthodox professor. In England, Matthew Arnold had revealed to the layman the purely literary character of the Old and the New Testaments. Abroad, German and Dutch theologians had undermined belief in the personality of the supposed writers, while the author of "Supernatural Religion" had shown that there was no evidence for miracles. Johnson, after examining the literary character and authorship of these Scriptures, proposed to himself a re-examination of the history of Christianity from its inception. The result of his earlier inquiries appeared in his "Antiqua Mater," published anonymously towards the end of 1887, and in a Latin essay which he wrote for a Dutch Theological Society.

The tracing down of the so-called early Christian records was intensely interesting. Coming suddenly, after months of earnest research, upon a clue, it was gradually revealed to him that the actual writers of the Church and Gospel histories were not ancient. Not one only, or a few only, of the supposed ancient writers seemed to write in a "sixteenth-century" manner, as Canon Westcott had remarked of Jerome: nearly all of them belonged to that late period. In some respects,

for one who had spent years in teaching so-called orthodox Christianity, it was painful to have to record the result. But with that peculiar sense of triumph of which men are conscious when having cast away the leading-strings of authority and having learned to depend solely upon their own intelligence, he did not dread any feelings of resentment which the results might arouse upon their publication, and so sat down to the onerous task of recording them.

“The Rise of Christendom” appeared in October, 1890. For a book of its high character the Press notices were, on the whole, hesitating; in some cases discreetly silent. Few treated the work with the consideration it deserved; or challenged its statements or its conclusions—a disappointment to its author. It may be that Johnson assumed too much on the part of his readers and the critics, to many of whom the work was probably little more than a paradox. Gibbon and other historians are supposed to rest on the bed-rock of authority. It was the supposed bed-rock authorities behind Gibbon who were attacked in “The Rise of Christendom.” Fortunately for its author, the book was understood by a few thoughtful men. The late Mr. Froude read it with the closest interest and attention, and asked the author to call upon him. This Johnson did, the conversation on the occasion being followed by a correspondence on the questions raised in the book and on collateral subjects. In course of time notices of the book and letters arrived from the Antipodes, where, by a few, as in America, the import of the work was perceived, and (by one or two able critics) described as one of the most important books of the century—an appreciation contrasting greatly with the coldness or silence of the critics at home.

Soon after the publication of "The Rise of Christendom," Johnson, adopting the suggestion of a friend, wrote a work of fiction, the idea being that the results of his researches, if presented in romantic or allegorical form, might possibly be more intelligible to the large number of thoughtful persons unable, through lack of the very wide range of reading and knowledge assumed by the author on the part of his audience, to follow the arguments contained in "The Rise of Christendom." This romance, "The Quest of Mr. East," completed in 1889, was not published until ten years later, when, in 1900, it appeared over the pseudonym of "John Soane." In it are embodied some of the author's observations of the phases of religious philosophy and its modern expounders. It was well written, and has been very well received.

The author meantime continued his writings; for "The Rise of Christendom," comparatively small though its circulation had been, had created among the few a demand for further enlightenment. It was not possible for a subject so vast—a critical subject, too, comprehending a wider field than that covered by Mosheim, Gibbon and Milman, extending over the whole range of European and Semitic literature, to be disposed of in a single volume of 500 pages.

A complementary work—the present volume on the "Rise of English Culture"—was completed towards the end of 1891. This work, which brings the results of the author's researches into "Mediæval" history nearer home, shows that Celtic and Anglo-Saxon civilization is not only mythic (as other critics had already discovered), but also that the "History" of Bede and some of the Chronicles could not possibly have been written before the time of Henry VII. or Henry VIII.

While writing "English Culture" Johnson prepared several short papers on "Saxon Charters," "British Origins," "English Records," "Foundation Legends of Oxford and Cambridge," "Biblical Legends," "Biblical Geography," "Gothic and Saracen Architecture," and made notes for a work on "French Culture" which is left unfinished. By way of relaxation he also wrote, about this time, a series of papers on Robert Browning, touching on a few characteristic points in the personality and art of the poet. A "Primer or Elements of Historic Science," undertaken at the suggestion of Mr. Froude, was written in 1892, and a translation into English of the "Prolegomena" of Father Hardouin, copies of the Jesuit's work being scarce, and no full translation from the Latin existing. To various liberal and advance-thought publications he contributed from time to time miscellaneous articles on the same subjects written in more popular vein. These included chapters on "English History," articles on "Gibbon and the Origin of Christianity," on the "History of Eusebius," and "Notes on Jewish Literature and the Jews in Spain:" some of these papers have been reprinted in American periodicals. "The Pauline Epistles, re-studied and explained," an account of the origin of New Testament writings and of the Protestant Reformation in Europe, issued in 1893, had a fair circulation.

The late Mr. Arbuthnot, Oriental scholar, met Johnson on several occasions to discuss the subject of Chronology with him, and there is no doubt that Johnson would have produced a valuable work on Calendars and Chronological Systems, but his health breaking down, he was obliged to lay aside the mass of notes and extracts which he had accumulated on this subject. This material was subsequently acquired by

Mr. Arbuthnot. "The Mysteries of Chronology," which appeared in 1900, was very largely based on information which Johnson supplied. The suggestion, however, for the formation of a new Era, "The Victorian," was Mr. Arbuthnot's own.

Beyond an occasional letter to a private correspondent, Johnson wrote little more. His earlier and unpublished work, except that on "Greek Mythology and Religion," was to some extent superseded by that containing the result of his latest discoveries and research. Of his work on the whole he has recorded his own feeling and impressions towards the end of "The Pauline Epistles." "It was," he writes, "a very distressing curiosity that goaded me to undertake these investigations. In one respect the result has been a grievous disappointment, because, instead of discovering a solid basis of witnessed and accredited facts, I have found nothing but clear and irresistible evidence of the schemes and devices of a secret literary society,* whose bold statements have again and again to

* The author writes strongly: he has been over the ground, I have not, and would try to find another explanation. Theologies and Ecclesiastical systems, formulated by societies, councils, synods, have generally had their origin in individual speculation or belief. See below, pp. xxxix., xl., lii.

"On the other hand, the intense *esprit de corps* of a convent of monks went beyond anything that we can now realize, and led to grave sins against truth and honesty. The forgeries of charters, bulls, and legal instruments of all kinds for the glorification of a monastery by its members was at least condoned only too frequently. It can hardly be doubted that the scriptorium of many a religious house must have been turned to very discreditable uses by unscrupulous and clever scribes, with the connivance if not with the actual knowledge of the convent, for such things were not done in a corner. If the forgeries succeeded—and that they often did succeed we know—the monastery got all the advantage of the rascality; no inquiry was made, and it was tacitly assumed that where so much was gained, and the pride of 'our house' was gratified, the end justified the means."—Dr. Jessopp, "Coming of the Friars," and other Essays, etc., pp. 160, 161.

The subject of literary forgery by monks has been strongly commented

be contradicted out of their own writings. ‘These things were not done in a corner,’ Paul is made to say. But they were done in a corner, ‘We have not followed cunningly devised fables,’ the brother-Apostle is made to say, and yet the whole system is one of cunningly devised fables. . . . One trained like myself to believe in and defend these writings, and to look upon the Church as, ideally at least, a glorious institution, free from spot, wrinkle, blemish, or any such thing, cannot reflect upon these things without pain. By instinct and old affection my place is among her servants or allies. But the duty of the literary critic is no less serious and stern than that of the Judge upon the Bench; and my conscience, as a critic, compels me to condemn an institution which is stained, and maculate, and deformed by complicity with so much of falsehood and fraud, and to make what effort I can towards a new reformation.

“In these gentler days it surely is not too much to hope that the Church may resolve to turn down her falsified and iniquitous pages, and begin the Chronicle of a new era, inscribed with the records of her endeavours in the cause of knowledge, of truth, of human love—records at the same time of the admiration and gratitude of the world. May these things be!”*

That, in brief, is the story of Johnson’s literary work. Of what he was in his own home, or of his generous help to poor students, I am not permitted to speak. He was modest to a degree, and rarely spoke or wrote of himself or of his books. The modern interviewer was a person to avoid. “If,” said he (it was one

upon by Milman, Sir Harris Nicolas, M. Giry, Isaac Disraeli, and others. See also Arbutnot, “Mysteries of Chronology,” pp. 24, 25, 37.

* “The Rise of Christendom,” p. 494.

of his last utterances)—“if, in the future, there are any inquiries about me, say, ‘I live in my books.’” His books are, however, with one exception, impersonal. Johnson the man was greater than Johnson the author.

Some of his feelings and experiences may be found in “The Quest of Mr. East;” some are given above. He was no “Dryasdust,” no recluse, but eminently human, genial by temperament, a cheerful companion, and fond of society. Until his last illness, he was saved from being cast down by a large sense of humour which one of his friends remarked had “a kind of Charles Lamb flavour, without the mint sauce.” Though feeling the cold criticism, like St. John in “Mr. East,” he was on the whole cheered with kind words of men to him unknown, who praised the candour, the humanity, the this and that good quality of pages into which the thought and struggle of years had gone (p. 242).

One who did not feel able, or profess to understand the tendency of his writings, says—

“Words would fail to record all the spiritual sympathies which were a living force in his character to the last. Of his affectionate affinities, of his subtle suggestiveness in conversation, of his power to make men look their own thoughts in the face, many of his old students and friends will now be thinking. . . . To those who knew the peculiar flavour of his humour, ‘The Quest of Mr. East’ was a book full of charm; in reality a long-drawn-out parable, depicting many salient features of the modern religious world, and describing the search of the soul for the true Christ. There was great pathos about his life; and the pain and difficulty associated with his course brought out more clearly his innate refinement, while even amid disabling suffering he exercised a strange attractiveness which led into

friendship with him men of all ways of thinking. He will live enshrined not only in the tender love of those who so patiently ministered to his dying wants, but in the hearts of a large number who gained stimulus, not merely from what he said, but from what he was."

Another friend, member of an Association to which Johnson belonged, wrote—

"Those who were present at our last annual Dinner did not fail to recognize that the Valkyries had marked out for death him who was the most learned of the guests. During all the years the Dinner had obtained the author of 'Antiqua Mater' had, regularly, a place at the table. . . . His reputation for sound erudition, and the daring devotion to what appeared to him historic truth which had subjected him to professional and social martyrdom, rendered him a conspicuous and honoured figure, year after year, in our festive conclave. But we gradually came to lose sight of the accomplished scholar in the genial man. The massive brow, furrowed with the plough of thought, lost its classic severity in the good man's genial and benevolent smile, and we, his companions, lost sight of the most learned in the most lovable of men. I have never known a man more single-minded and of simpler heart. . . . Our late friend was too ingenuous and unselfish for this callous and selfish world. He gave it the ripe fruitage of his intellectual and moral manhood." "The world visited him in return," continues the same writer, "with the loss of his professorship and the rusting mildew of unmerited neglect. He complained not; no choleric word did he utter by voice or pen; but the wrong weighed heavily upon his refined and susceptible nature; old age supervened prematurely, and he who should have

had the energy for valuable years of hard work still in him has been blotted out of the present, and is, already, an item of the past."

Closer friends, however, knew the man better; though he had put forth his hand and touched the sacred Ark, and calamity had seemed to come upon him, in the shape of an insidious and incurable disease, he knew that he had contributed towards the solution of the problem of the religious history of our Western World—the solution of which will establish SPIRITUAL UNITY. He was much encouraged by kind and sympathetic and thoughtful letters, and while able to continue his writing, had put his soul into it—

"STRIVING FOR THE NEARER VISION OF THE TRUE, THE BEAUTIFUL,
THE GOOD."

He passed from a death in life to Rest on the 3rd of October, 1901, at the comparatively early age of 59. But his work was well done.

His last message for me, one of his latest friends, who least expected a message, was to the effect that I would see this book through the press. With the generous help of a few friends in sympathy with the author's life-work, that request is now realized. The text is printed *verbatim* from the author's manuscript. If it could have received his finishing touches, doubtless it would have been even more worthy of the reader's perusal than it is.

In an appendix will be found a List of Johnson's principal writings published and unpublished, including separate volumes, essays, lectures, addresses, and other papers, representing a great range of critical reading and of original research in European and Oriental literature.

II.

The main results of Johnson's researches, as recorded in his printed writings, are briefly these :—

That the History of Europe—especially Ecclesiastical History—is founded largely upon assumption as well as upon tradition, legend, and error, the biographies of real persons being idealized. That the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures are proleptic in character. That there was no constituted Christian Church before the “Eleventh” Century of our Era—eight hundred years ago. That the larger part of the so-called “Middle Ages” is an imaginary or non-existent period; the Modern Period beginning soon after the breaking up of the old Roman Empire. We are therefore not so far removed in time from the Greeks and Romans as our Chronological table teaches. Further : Johnson has traced our Ecclesiastical System backwards to the Arabians, who owe nothing whatever to Latin or Greek Christianity—the indebtedness being in the opposite direction. Christianity, in some form, was, however, anterior to all these systems.

These are no wild theories to be summarily rejected. Though some of the statements may seem too bold or too arbitrary, the reader will find the author's arguments quite intelligible, and not unreasonable.

Many have discovered inexplicable anomalies and discrepancies in their reading of History : in Johnson's printed writings they will, I think, find a solution of their difficulties, an explanation of many things hitherto imperfectly or wholly misunderstood, especially of matters in relation to our System of Chronology.* In

* Our own System of Chronology being impugned, I once asked the author, “How do we stand in relation to other Systems?” and suggested

the following pages I have endeavoured to bring together some of the anomalies noticed in my own reading. Those given could easily be supplemented by many more in support of our author's arguments.

The saying that Geography and Chronology are the two "Eyes" of History has become so hackneyed an expression that we are apt to forget the rational "Mind" of the Observer behind them. Even careful historians write of long stretches of a thousand and fifteen hundred years as if historical time was unlimited. The average educated person so easily, in imagination, transfers himself from continent to continent, or from century to century, and speaks or writes of this or that event as having happened in the "second," or the "seventh," or the "nineteenth," or any intervening century, as if time had been reckoned in this manner all through the Era. Speaking generally, no Ancient Era was in use, or in force, from its commencement, nor till long afterwards. The term "Anno Domini," and the reckoning backwards to the supposed beginning of the Era, has been in general use less than four hundred years. Before that time reckoning was by the reigns of kings and princes, and popes; indeed, our Acts of Parliament are still dated by the year of the reign of the King.

Inscriptions and Manuscripts, when undated, are allocated to particular centuries by the Palæographical expert, who ascertains the dates from the language, or contents, or the style of the caligraphy, which may, perhaps, have been due to the caprice of the writers. Accordingly, when we meet with statements that any that he should make some attempt towards a reconstruction. The notes and memoranda utilized by Mr. Arbuthnot may have been a step in the direction indicated.

Christian document belongs to the period between the "second" and the "tenth" century, we may assume that the date given is merely conjectural. Too much emphasis cannot, therefore, be laid upon this subject of Chronology, for upon it rests the credibility and authenticity of Church records, and the true date of the Church's foundation.

Like other Ecclesiastical Eras, the Christian Era has been much exaggerated—antedated. A chronological table being necessary, a "Dionysius Exiguus" was found. The scheme of fourteen or fifteen anterior centuries being laid down, Christian Historians, like Christian Geographers, who,

"With savage pictures filled their Maps
And o'er unhabitable downs
Placed Elephants for want of towns,"

very soon filled up the vacant Plan with names and edifying deeds of Ecclesiastical Princes, Churchmen, and Saints—or of their supposed opponents; for, History to the Christian writers was Allegory rather than a Science of Observation or of Reasoning. Glancing over the Period between the "Fourth" and "Eleventh" centuries we see that it is spaced out with Christian and Ecclesiastical matters, or of secular matter which interested the Church. For purely secular names we look in vain; between Galen and Ptolemy in the "Second" and the Arabians of the "Ninth" there is a blank. Speaking of Ptolemy, one is reminded that his "Geography" of the "Second" and that of the "Thirteenth" Centuries are almost alike.

The eleven centuries of the Eastern Empire (from Constantine to the Fall of Constantinople) are filled up by Byzantine historians, a long unbroken chain. Their

writings form a part of the world's annals which has long been held up to contempt as the record of a thousand years of moral and political emptiness. The glowing pen of a Gibbon has failed to create an interest in the lives and deeds of a long succession of blood-thirsty tyrants and impotent debauchees.*

Finlay and Freeman would dwell upon the nobler characteristics of the Period—the deeds of Belisarius, Heraclius, Leo the Isaurian, and other individuals, largely idealized and of uncertain date; but, while we read we cannot lose sight of the scribes, who think the same thoughts and write the same language, which does not alter in a thousand years!—to borrow the expression of one of Johnson's correspondents, they "all use the same pen and ink!" Throughout these Chronicles of corruption, calamity, crime, supposed to be incident to a decaying empire, no link is lost. The long-drawn-out Story as we have it, was probably written after the Turks had entered into possession.

Writing of another supposed Christian people—the Ethiopians—Gibbon says of them, "they slept near a thousand years forgetful of the world by whom they were forgotten." † Christian Coptic contrasts strongly with Old Coptic. ‡ Of China, known to the Romans, it may be said with as much reason as of Abyssinia, that she also was forgotten by Europe for a similar period. We have no notices of China between the time of

* *Quarterly Review*, No. 188, p. 526; Freeman, "The Byzantine Empire," "Essays," iii., 1879, pp. 231, 232.

† There is a hiatus of about 700 years before the Abyssinian Annals begin, A.D. 1268. Futile attempts have been made to bridge this gulf, and to tell the History of the Church in Abyssinia—by Le Quien, "Oriens Christianus," 1740, and Rev. Montague Fowler, "Christian Egypt,—Church in Abyssinia," 1901.

‡ Mr. F. Ll. Griffith, Oxford Reader in Egyptology, in "Ency. Brit.," xxvii. 727.

Arrian and Ptolemy and the mission of Carpini in 1246. But there are seeming references in Chinese records to the Roman Empire at a comparatively recent period when, according to the orthodox Chronology, it had long been dead and buried.

In India, as in China, Chronology is in an unsettled state. India has no history properly so-called before the Mohammedan invasion in the thirteenth century.* Not one of her races or small nationalities ever kept a chronicle.† A learned philologist notices the absence of written memorials or literature or data by which to trace the current popular speech during a "dark age," a "long night of nine centuries!" "The curtain falls on Indian languages about the first century, and does not rise again until the tenth." "I very much doubt," he continues, "whether the intervening space will ever be filled up, the materials seem to be lost for ever. Buddhism is our only chance—there seems to be no more to hope for . . . and these nine centuries must remain for ever a sealed book."‡ This state of things is reported of a country to which Europe is indebted for her figures and arithmetic and for some of her religious

* In Mr. Lane-Poole's "Mediæval India" (1903), the period of several centuries between the Arab Conquest of Sind and the Mohammedan invasion occupies less than two pages. He says: "The Arab Conquest led to nothing, and left scarcely a vestige. . . . The Arab cities have perished, but the wrecks of the castles and cities of their predecessors . . . still bear witness to the civilization which they uprooted." Was there an Arab period such as that hitherto represented?

† Fergusson, "Indian Architecture," 1876, p. 6.

‡ Beames, "Compar. Grammar," vol. i., 1872, pp. 22, 23.

Later note (since the foregoing was in type): "The Indians continued, for centuries after writing materials had become available to them, not only not to feel the want of them, but even to prefer, so far as books are concerned, to do without them, a state of things, as he remarks, unique in the history of the world."—From review of Rhys Davids, "*Buddhist India*," *Athenæum*, September 26, 1903.

ideas—a country wherein the priestly and writing Order has never died out. The Age of most Hindu writings is unknown, and the authors are themselves merged in Nirvana.* There is no hope, however, of Buddhist records furnishing material for the “long night.” General Maisey † is inclined to reduce the Buddhist period by six hundred years, while Fergusson would place the Buddha Gaya buildings, alleged to be of the first century B.C., in the fourteenth century A.C.

Material of the most meagre character covers a corresponding “dark age” in Persian history—material, apparently, of Arabic, not Persian literature.

The Benedictine, or Christian, Chronology seems therefore to be as little applicable to African and Oriental civilizations as to those of Europe. When our conventional nineteen hundred years ‡ is applied to Abyssinia, to India, to Persia, the history of each of these countries shows a similar gap or night, extending over many centuries — gaps which cannot be bridged by any contemporary records. While the ancient and modern periods are filled with authentic records, more or less perfect, the middle or so-called “Mediæval” period is fabulous, or occupied with attenuated matter borrowed from the earlier and later periods.

The historians of Christianity tell us of heresiarchs, of apologists, of defenders of Church doctrines, and of Councils convened to settle difficulties. These Councils began early and have continued all through the Ages covered by the Church History. They were at one time so frequent that bishops and clergy had

* Caldwell, “Dravidian Languages,” 1875, p. 128.

† “Sanchi and its Remains,” 1892.

‡ Or, say, 2200 years to Alexander the Great, whose conquests are recorded in authentic European, Asiatic, and African annals.

(one would suppose) little else to do except to prepare for and attend them. We read of Councils in Asia Minor, Councils in Germany, Councils in France, Councils in all parts of the Empire.

In Africa the Church found its most zealous confessors of the Faith and its most gifted defenders.* Tertullian and Cyprian, Arnobius and Lactantius, and the greatest of all Churchmen, Augustine, were natives of Africa. It was through Africa that Christianity became the religion of the World. In North Africa at one time there were no fewer than 600 bishops' sees. At the Council of Carthage St. Augustine led 286 orthodox bishops, Petilianus 279 Donatists. Explorers as well as historians inform us that while the Romans have left enduring marks and a wealth of inscriptions in North Africa, Christianity has left none, and is completely extirpated!† The only explanation is that Augustine and the other Confessors and their Church Councils are myths. Strange to say, these "Africans" wrote in Greek, when Latin was the language generally spoken. "But," adds the latest writer on Roman Africa, "the Greek was not the Greek of Æschylus or of Sophocles . . . it possessed an originality that was remarkable."‡ It was the barbarous Greek of the Monks of the "Middle Ages," when Christian writers were most prolific and most ignorant.§

The great number of MSS. of the New Testament still in existence—"more than 3000 (besides the very large number of versions)—as compared with the few score of copies (often less) of the Classical writers—

* Mommsen, "African Provinces," ii. 345.

† Graham, "Roman Africa," 1902, p. xiii.; Davis, "Ruined Cities," 1862, pp. 140-146.

‡ Graham, p. 301.

§ See Comparetti, "Vergil in the Middle Ages," 1895, pp. 125-127.

Æschylus, Sophocles, Thucydides, Horace, Lucretius, Tacitus, and many more"—has been adduced to show "how immensely superior is the position of the New Testament."* Does this not tend rather to show its more recent origin? If there has been a careful regard for New Testament documents, how is it that the Old Testament documents were not preserved? That the New Testament writings are more recent than the Classical is evidenced by the Palimpsests: "The most valuable texts of Classical authors are over-written by Syriac and Greek Christian texts; Christian texts underlying Classical texts are of late date." †

To come to Rome itself. The Eternal City is her own witness. In "The Rise of Christendom" Johnson has commented on the absence of authentic Papal coins older than the twelfth century, while Mr. Arbuthnot, after a search through the museums of Europe, came to the decision that there are no authentic Papal records earlier than A.D. 1198. ‡ The historians of Architecture mark the eleventh and twelfth centuries as the commencement of Cathedral building in Italy, France, and England. There are no earlier remains of any Ecclesiastical buildings in this country; and on the Continent they succeed the Roman temples and palaces without a break. The latest editor of Gibbon tells us that the study of Byzantine Architecture has not yet begun. §

Forty years ago an Eminent Historian and Statesman, happily still with us, observed that, "The modern

* Kenyon, "How the Bible came down to us:" *Harper's Mag.*, Nov., 1902, p. 922.

† Thompson, "Palæography," 1893, pp. 76, 77.

‡ "Mysteries of Chronology," pp. 30, 31.

§ Bury's "Gibbon," i. p. lxi.

traveller, after his first few days in Rome, begins to seek for relics of the twelve hundred years that lie between Constantine and Pope Julius II. 'Where,' he asks, 'is the Rome of the Middle Ages?' To this question," the writer adds, "there is no answer."* The historian of "The Holy Roman Empire" is again in Rome as I write (April, 1903) attending a Congress of Historians. Does Mr. Bryce see more to-day than he saw during his former visit? I think not; for, the late Mr. Freeman was similarly impressed. Aware of the continuity and unity of history, he noticed in Rome a "gap"—"a wider gulf between the great periods of history than can be found anywhere else—a yawning gap indeed. . . . At the first glance Rome seems to be rich in monuments of the early days of her Emperors and of the later days of her Pontiffs, and to have little to show of any other intermediate age."†

The intelligent reader will remind me that underground are the witnesses—the Catacombs. What (he may ask) of the Christian Martyrs and the Ten Great Persecutions? The answer to this question is an easy one. The Catacombs are the graveyards of the Roman people. The Story of persecutions of any body of believers in the Capital of the Roman World, the government and rule of which was the most free and tolerant known to us, is a libel and is inconceivable. That Marcus Aurelius, "the most perfect man that ever lived," should have permitted the torment and murder of Christian men and women, for a belief as harmless as his own, is a charge for which there is no evidence, and it must be dismissed. In the Catacombs, disused

* "Holy Roman Empire," 1873, pp. 272, 273; 1889, pp. 261, 262; Mr. Bryce, I see (January 4, 1904), refers the reader to Gregorovius, so that the quotation may be from that writer.

† "Essays," iii. 2.

early in the "fifth" and reopened towards the end of the "sixteenth" century, the same writers who give us incredible Church history, see in the Cross, and other Roman and pre-Roman symbols, emblems of Christianity. In the innumerable inscriptions "B.M." which, to those who had sorrowed for the departed, stood for "Bene Merenti" or "Bonæ Memorix"—equivalent to our own "Blessed" or "Affectionate Memory"—they saw another meaning, and in some unexplained manner, these initial letters were taken to mean "Blessed Martyr," and, extending over long periods, there grew up the belief in Ten Great Persecutions.*

Some of the Christian literature may have been composed as themes for discussion and disputation, the disputants using assumed names, merging themselves in a sort of Nirvana, like the Buddhist writers. This would explain the origin of much of the proleptic writing, the authors little suspecting that in after ages it would be taken as inspired. Some of the works of St. Augustine would come into this category. One man at that time could scarcely have written all that is now attributed to him. The "Confessions" is not an autobiography, but a spiritual manual; its style is that of the "Imitation of Christ" (of the fourteenth or fifteenth century),† and the progress of Augustine

* There is a story of the Catacombs having been visited in the "Fourth" century by St. Jerome, when a boy. He used to make the circuit of the sepulchres of the Apostles and Martyrs on Sundays; but Jerome (*vide* Bp. Westcott) writes like a "sixteenth-century scholar." More; when he translated the Old Testament used the sixteenth century signs for punctuation—a thousand years before they came into general use! It is also to be noticed that some of his works are of a late period, and written over older authors—palimpsest.

† "St. Augustine's style in the 'Confessions' belongs to the same family

from Neo-Platonism through Manichæism into Christianity is typical of the growth of Christianity itself. In the "City of God," designed to inaugurate a new order of things, the writer brought into clear light the distinction between the kingdoms of greed and power and that of righteousness and truth, as far as he knew it.

Edification rather than truth must be looked for in Ecclesiastical writings. The scribes of that period wrote not for a critical or sceptical age in a distant future. In the Scriptorium they could take cognisance only of such material as they collected in their neighbourhood—legendary or traditional, or of the Oriental theology and literature, the wild, the marvellous, the incredible, not infrequently, the indecent—which edified or amused the European peoples from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. The nobler class of men in the monasteries lived, in a sense, a beautiful life, which could have ended only in a state of Nirvana. Believing in the transitoriness of this world, their hope was fixed upon another. This one, they argued, was "very evil, the time was waxing late," their duty was, they thought, to "be sober and keep vigil," for "the Judge was at the gate."

The first Christian missionaries were much surprised to find evidence of Christianity among the Tartars; they discovered Nestorians and Jews in China as well as in India. Certain tablets and inscriptions must have been forged, say some sceptics; but monasteries, processions, pilgrimages, festivals, a pontifical court, and colleges of

as that of the 'De Imitatione,' the dominant note is the same . . . the same musical flow, the same spiritual refinement and distinction."—Introduction to Dr. Bigg's edition, 1898, p. 5.

Archbishop Ullathorne ("Autobiography," p. 41) also used the "Confessions" as a Spiritual Manual.

clergy are found all through the historical period, and all Ecclesiastical systems—Christian, Mohammedan, Buddhist, Lamaistic—doubtless have a common origin.*

Again, the reader may ask: "Do not the city of Jerusalem and the Holy Land witness to the historical truth of the Bible?" Johnson shows that the "narratives" in the Old and New Testaments have come to us through Arabian and Persian Chronicles, that the name "Jerusalem" is a poetical one like that of "Mount Zion"; that the city now called Jerusalem was known to the Arabs as the "Ælia Capitolina" of the Romans. The Holy Land of the Old Testament must be looked for elsewhere than in Palestine. The Holy Land of the New Testament Johnson found in Southern Italy. Mount Sinai, Professor Sayce informs us, has not yet been correctly identified; it is not in the peninsula which is now called Sinaitic.†

* Isaac Taylor, in his "Ancient Christianity" (1840), traced Monasticism to India, and Buddhism is believed to have established itself in Alexandria. Gnosticism was anterior to Christianity, and open to Indian influence (Kennedy, *Asiatic Journal*, April, 1902). Romanism, Nestorianism, and Mussulmanism have all one source, and are derived from Brahmanism and Buddhism (Parker, "China's Intercourse," pp. 29, 33). The word "Paradise" and the idea of the Resurrection are Persian in their origin. The Magi or Parsees claim Abraham as their prophet and reformer, and he is identified with Zoroaster in Mohammedan writings (Haug, "Essays," 1884, p. 16). Mohammedanism is indebted to the Zendavesta, but not to the Christian Scriptures; the latter, as Johnson has shown, is indebted to the Koran. We do not find a single ceremony or doctrine of Islam in the smallest degree moulded or even tinged by the peculiar tenets of Christianity (Muir, "Life of Mahomet," p. 153). There is no evidence that Mohammed had any practical acquaintance with the Old or New Testament Scriptures (Sell, "Faith of Islam," 1896, p. 13). The Koran knows nothing of Paul or of his doctrines. The Koran recognizes Jesus as a divine messenger, and will be found to approach more closely the doctrines of Jesus than those of Paul (Ernest de Bunsen, *Asiatic Quarterly*, April, 1889, p. 259). This again confirms Johnson in his solution of the enigma of the Pauline teaching in the New Testament ("Pauline Epistles," pp. 139-140).

† *Asiatic Quarterly*, July, 1893.

The Jewish chronological system is quite modern.* The Hebrews were a sect among the Arabs in Spain, and their own writings, as distinct from the historical portions now held sacred, contain internal evidence of a recent and local origin. The prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, with the Lamentations, Obadiah, etc., were written during the troublous persecutions of the Jews in modern times, and some partake of a local colouring. Ford, and other travellers in the North of Spain, have remarked upon the likeness of that country to the Palestine of Scripture.† "I thought myself," wrote Beckford, "suddenly transported to Palestine." ‡

One of the charges made against Servetus was that he had impugned the Scripture geography as applied to Palestine (the land of the Philistines).§ For more than forty years explorers have been searching for Hebrew inscriptions in Palestine. Other inscriptions have been found there in abundance, but not a single Hebrew word. The Moabite Stone, if authentic, would have been the oldest known specimen of alphabetic writing in Western Asia. This is too great a demand upon our credulity. It proves too much, and thus shows its falsity. The inscription at the Pool of Siloam cannot be Hebrew.|| The oldest Hebrew writing at present

* There is no satisfactory account of an *ancient* Jewish chronological system, and the *modern* Jewish Era was not known before the fourteenth century A.D. See Cowasjee Patell, "Chronology," 1866, pp. 21, 22.

† "The situation of the Scripture Sepharad has always been a matter of uncertainty, and cannot even now be said to be settled" (Sir George Grove). On the Sephardim (Spanish Jews), Ashkenazim (German and Polish Jews), and Jewish sects, Pharisees, etc., see Wolff, "Travels," vol. i. chap. vii.

‡ "Italy, Spain, and Portugal," 1840, p. 423.

§ Servetus was not even original in this: at his trial (1553) he acknowledged that he quoted from another writer, but, incautiously for himself, added that the remark on Palestine (in the Ptolemy of 1535) contained nothing that was not true.—Willis, "Servetus," pp. 96, 97, 325.

|| Lieutenant Conder believed both to be genuine. Yet he tells us that

known is generally referred to our so-called eighth or ninth century A.D., 1800 or 1900 years later than the alleged age of the Moabite Stone.* Square Hebrew, Conder writes,† is scarcely older than Jerome's time (whenever that was), and the Hebrew points have an equally insignificant antiquity. To get over this difficulty another eminent scholar suggests that the old Hebrew died out, and that a kind of survival of it exists in the Judeo-German and Judeo-Spanish jargons.‡

If we accept the so-called orthodox history, we are to believe that while the literature of Egypt, of Assyria, of the Hittites, and other peoples, has been locked up for 2000 or 3000 years, that of Israel has always been available!§ No, the truth appears to be with

“the forgery of Jewish coins continues actively to be pursued in Palestine. . . . At Sidon, Phœnician antiquities, Moabite pottery, etc. At Nablous . . . Samaritan rolls. . . . Synagogue prayer-books, steeped in coffee-grounds, assume an age of about three thousand years in the space of three weeks.” —“Heth and Moab,” 1883, pp. 431, 432.

* On the Moabite Stone, see Dr. Ginsburg's edition; Dr. Cust, “Essays,” i. pp. 326, 382, 383; ii. p. 30; *Agnostic Journal*, October and November, 1893. On the inscription at the Pool of Siloam, see *Athenæum*, March, May, and July, 1881; *Academy*, July, 1881; *Agnostic Journal*, October and November, 1893. On the Hebrews and Hebrew Manuscripts, see some remarks in Smith-Williams Prefatory Essay to “Ency. Brit.,” xxvii. pp. xii.-xiv., 1902.

† “Heth and Moab,” 1889, 176, 177.

‡ Dr. Cust, “Essays,” iii. pp. 16, 17.

§ Prof. Graetz, in the preface to the English translation of his “History of the Jews” (London, 1891), remarks that “English readers . . . will the better understand the miracle which is exhibited in the history of the Jews during three thousand years. The continuance of the Jewish race until the present day is a marvel not to be overlooked even by those who deny the existence of miracles, and who only see in the most astounding events, both natural and supernatural, the logical results of cause and effect. Here we observe a phenomenon, which has developed and asserted itself in spite of all laws of nature, and we behold a culture which, notwithstanding unspeakable hostility against its exponents, has nevertheless modified the organism of nations” (pp. v., vi).

Since this paper was in type, a book entitled “The Biblical History of the Hebrews,” by F. J. Foakes-Jackson, B.D., has been published. The author

Johnson : " the Hebrew literature is modern literature ; all our information about Hebrew books from the Hebrews themselves is sixteenth-century information ; the tales of ' Palestinian ' and ' Babylonian ' Schools are but tales." * Some have supposed that Hebrew was the parent of Arabic or a sister language. One of the most ancient and most widely circulated books is the " Fables of Bidpai ;" the translations came to Europe from the Sanscrit through the Arabic. From the Arabic it was rendered into Greek, into Persian, into Hebrew and into Spanish ; from the Hebrew into Latin ; from the Latin into German, Italian, French, English, Danish, and Dutch. This seems to indicate that Arabic is older than Hebrew. Robertson Smith has told us that in grammatical structure Arabic comes nearer than Hebrew to the original Semitic ; Arabic represents the original wealth and primitive subtlety of Semitic speech. † Arabic is singularly copious, and possesses a vocabulary which rivals if it does not exceed that of any other language in extent, and is more fully developed than any other Semitic tongue. ‡ Hebrew is a comparatively poor language. § The earliest European Arabic scholars claimed for Arabic that its study was the only true road to the understanding of the Hebrew. The word " Hebrew " has never been found in the early monuments of other admits that the Old Testament histories (Genesis, etc.) are not contemporaneous documents, which has long been ascertained from internal evidence, but he does not see, what Johnson shows, that they are of very much later date, or that they come to us in a less direct manner, than is generally supposed. He is, however, rightly inclined to place their " spiritual " value above any consideration of their literal truth ; and this is now the general practice in the English Churches.

* " Pauline Epistles," pp. 134, 137.

† " Ency. Brit.," xi. 596.

‡ Canon Cook, " Origin of Religions," &c., 1884, pp. 277-280.

§ Prof. Dr. Arn. Montet, *Asiatic Quarterly*, Oct., 1899, p. 388.

Eastern nations.* Not one Hebrew inscription of the age of the Jewish Monarchy has come down to us.† For more than 300 years the Holy Sites—the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Golgotha, &c.—have been characterized as frauds, scandalous cheats, and forgeries.‡ A late traveller has recorded his conviction that the “Giant Cities” in Bashan are an illusion. “It is not of Og, but of the Antonines; not of the Israelitish, but of the Saracenic conquest” that he is reminded.§

But we have Josephus, suggests the reader. The “Antiquities of the Jews” is a compilation from the Oriental Chronicles; the narrative of the “Wars of the Jews” a piece of fiction which carries on every page its refutation as history. Like the works of St. Augustine, Lactantius, and others of the fraternity, that of Josephus is in Greek; in one place the writer says that “the things told by the Jews who surrendered in the siege of Jerusalem only he understood.” The story has no special local colouring, and may be reminiscent of the period of the Crusades—the wars between East and West, not for a cross or sepulchre, but for the rule of the World. The Church of Rome, in the words of Johnson, “was founded in a time of darkness, wrath, and dismay, and the sole apology for the misdeeds of the founders of her temporal sway lies in the fact that it was at a time when violence alone reigned in the earth.”||

If Johnson is correct in his surmise that the breaking

* R. Smith, “E. B.,” xi. 594 b.

† Cust, “Essays,” i. p. 340.

‡ See quotations from Korte, and others, in Van de Velde’s “Syria and Palestine.” 2 vols. 1854.

§ Freshfield, “Caucasus and Bashan,” 1869, p. 59.

|| “The Rise of Christendom,” p. 494.

up of the old Roman Empire immediately preceded the Modern Period, then the remark of Macaulay, that "in Britain only an age of Fable separates two ages of Truth," will apply also to the history of Europe.

III.

Coming now to the subject of the present volume: The nearness of Rome to us has been noticed by other writers. While there are no Christian inscriptions or remains of Christian art, or Christian architecture in this country older than the "eleventh" century, Roman inscriptions abound—especially inscriptions in honour of Mithra, the symbols of which have found their way into Christianity.* There is a legend that the cathedral of St. Paul in London is erected on the site of a temple of Diana. As late as the time of Elizabeth a ceremony of the offering of a doe, or a buck and doe, at the high altar on the day of the Conversion of St. Paul was observed, and manors were held upon the due performance of this service.† When the Orientals entered Europe, the Roman legions were, no doubt, withdrawn: their wives and families probably remained in Britain, and their descendants are with us, along with Roman laws and observances. The remembrance and traditions are found in the "Bede" and other writings. The remains of roads, and camps, and villas, the Latin inscriptions, the large finds of Roman coins, all indicate the comparative nearness of the Roman Empire. On the other hand, Kemble long ago pointed out that the narratives of Saxon immigration and settlement in England are unhistorical.

* J. M. Robertson, "Religious Systems," pp. 194, 195.

† Jortin's "Life of Erasmus;" Rees' Ency., art. "Diana."

Throughout the Saga literature describing the expeditions of Northmen to England not a single instance is mentioned of their coming in contact with a people called Saxons. The Northmen (or Sueones) are mentioned by Tacitus, and not afterwards till the ninth century. This hiatus has been filled up with the Apocryphal Saxon history. The story of the Danes in the Chronicles is as little trustworthy as that of the Saxons, and bears the appearance of contradiction and confusion in regard to names of people and facts.*

The truth is that the Teutonic or Scandinavian element was in the country before the arrival of the Romans. Johnson says the "Anglo-Saxon letters are a sixteenth-century invention, and that it is impossible to trace the study of them higher than the Elizabethan scholars, or a hint of their being in existence before the time of Henry VIII." † It is commonly supposed that the days of the week are "Anglo-Saxon": they were introduced by the Romans, who borrowed them from the Egyptians. ‡

The stories of Brute and a long succession of British kings before the Romans, of Joseph of Arimathea at Glastonbury, have been relegated to the storehouse of Fable. The "Histories" and "Chronicles" of Gildas, Nennius, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Asser, Ingulf of Croyland and other writers of English history, have been for a long time accounted spurious documents. "William of Malmesbury picked up his history from the time of Bede," says Aubrey, "out of old songs." The history of Bede (who copied Nennius) is still

* On this paragraph see Du Chaillu, "The Viking Age," i. 20, 21.

† "The Pauline Epistles," p. 87.

‡ "Dio Cassius," lib. 36, quoted by Coote, "The Romans in Britain," 1878, pp. 429, 430.

accepted as authentic, and his memory held in veneration. He is also credited with a knowledge of Arabic and Oriental history and science. Gerbert (Pope Sylvester II.), who died in 1003, two centuries after the supposed period of "Bede," is said to have been the first European student of Arabic learning.

It is not possible to enter into elaborate arguments in this short Essay, but I may point out some of the anomalies in our "middle" history. Our later historians do not now repeat with confidence the extraordinary stories of Crécy and of Poitiers, when the flower of the French Armies were destroyed with the loss of only a few English archers and footmen, or that retaliatory French story of the burning of Joan of Arc by the English. We must remember, however, that upon the writers of these stories much of our early English history is founded. The story of the Norman Conquest originally occupied a poem, written fifty years after the event. The accretions which have since gathered around it now fill five stout volumes for William's reign, and two additional for his son Rufus. The combatants at the Battle of Hastings are variously estimated at from 60,000 to 150,000, of whom half were slain. The site of the battle-field is shown, but where are the remains?

Domesday Book is supposed to be of the same period. What collateral evidence is there that such a ponderous and voluminous work could have been compiled at that period? Usually we are dependent upon legends and traditions of history: here we have records without any legends or traditions, preserved for eight hundred years, perfect and in beautiful condition! * It is no doubt an authentic work, but what

* "The social history of England is almost a blank for two centuries

is its true date? Magna Charta, supposed to be two hundred years later, is scarcely readable. Bracton, who is said to have died in 1268, fifty years after the date of Magna Charta, knows nothing of it. There is no reference to it before the time of James the First or Charles the First, when it was "found."

Johnson draws attention* to a very curious fact observed by Mr. Thorold Rogers in the handwriting of English mediæval records. The styles of writing in four short and successive reigns all differ; the changes are sudden and almost simultaneous. There are (what is still more extraordinary) sudden changes in the economy of agriculture. Such changes appear to be due, as Johnson remarks, to art and craft in the scribes.

The conventional histories tell us that when Europe was in her "Dark Age," missionaries went out from a civilized and cultivated Ireland to Scotland, Wales, England, Scandinavia, and other countries, taking with them a knowledge of the Faith and of Art. Mr. Ruskin was a believer in this. "In the eighth century," he writes, "Ireland possessed a school of art in her manuscripts and sculpture which in many of its qualities—apparently in all essential qualities of decorative invention—was quite without a rival; seeming as if it might have advanced to the highest triumphs in architecture and painting. But," he continues, "there was one fatal flaw in its nature, by which it was stayed, and stayed with a conspicuousness of pause to which

afterwards, except for *the little which may be gathered from the chroniclers*. The new light which is thrown on the economic and social condition of the country at the time when continuous archives inform us of the facts, reveals a very different state of things from that which is exhibited in Domesday." Rogers, "Work and Wages," 1901, p. 18.

* "English Culture," p. 101.

there is no parallel." * The cause of that arrest, the Master explains as a national characteristic. The staying or arrest is a mistake : the dates must be wrong ! The famous Book of Kells, a MS. copy of the Gospels, upon which Mr. Ruskin founded his remarks, and which is said to have belonged to St. Columban (sixth century), founder of the monasteries of Iona and Lindisfarne, is perhaps the most beautiful book in the world, † the work rather of angelic than human skill ; ‡ and the Durham Book, § in a splendid binding of gold set with precious stones, are both credited to that early period. The story of Celtic Art in Ireland, of Celtic Art anywhere, twelve hundred years ago, is a fable. St. Columban as well as St. Patrick were ideals in the imagination of fifteenth or sixteenth century writers ; and the Book of Kells and the Durham Book doubtless belong to the time of the monasteries—to a period of repose and of luxury. The same remark applies to other manuscripts of supposed early date.

It is commonly assumed that the Universities were the offspring of the religious bodies. Our chief institutes of learning at Cambridge and Oxford were, in all probability, in existence before the arrival of any Christian order in England. ||

The studious reader will gather from this volume that the Period of the Tudors was not only a time of severe repression and of harsh government, but also a time when free speech was impossible. Able men could only dissemble and speak in allegory. The Plays of

* Dublin Lecture, "Mystery of Life and its Arts."

† Professor Westwood, "Facsimiles of MSS.," 1868.

‡ Giraldus Cambrensis.

§ In the British Museum.

|| See Dr. Jessopp, "The Building of a University," in "The Coming of the Friars," etc., pp. 262-301.

Shakespeare and of other writers are doubtless a reflection of the Period; the names but a disguise—the playwriters merely the spokesmen of those who would have been sent to the Tower and the Block if they had expressed their opinions openly. Mr. Legge in “The Unpopular King” finds no evidence that Richard III. was a murderer, or that the two princes were murdered.* Johnson shows how the Court flatterers schemed several titles to the Crown for Henry VII., but his only valid title was that of the Sword—a sword that was never sheathed till the Tudors had passed away.

The case, then, as it appears to me, is one which resolves itself into a consideration of dates, or of Chronology. Documents have been considered already and found anomalous, or, to say the least, “extraordinary.” We have authentic records and coins illustrating twelve or thirteen centuries only of the Era. For an intervening or Fabulous Period of, say, six hundred years we have nothing of an illuminating or contemporary character: all is either unreasonable, intangible, impossible, or borrowed from the preceding or subsequent periods. Reduce the Christian Era to one of twelve or thirteen centuries—the “first,” “second,” “third,” “fourth,” and the “eleventh” to “nineteenth,” and a legendary period only drops out of the Chart. With the Fall of the Roman Empire, the Northern and Eastern Civilizations, the Oriental Religions and Ecclesiasticism enter Europe. A desire on the part of the Roman Church to trace its origin

* I have only seen to-day (January 4, 1904) Sir Clements Markham's paper on Richard III. in *English Historical Review*, 1891 (vi. 250 ff.), and Mr. Gairdner's Rejoinder. Sir Clements argues that while Richard had no motive for the murder of the Princes, Henry VII., the real Usurper, had the strongest motive for getting rid of them.

to Christ—who undoubtedly preceded Mohammed—was presumably the motive for compiling Christian Documents. In an uncritical Age, along with argument and homily, allegory and parable, and moral teaching drawn from a variety of sources, numerous forgeries were easily foisted upon a credulous clergy as well as upon the laity. Later on, honest men collated, copied, commented on, and translated these writings, and, rejecting what they thought apocryphal, collected the rest into books, which Time and Time alone has sanctified. In such manner have all Sacred Books been compiled.

In the “seventeenth” and “eighteenth” centuries the European recovered the use of his intellect; the “nineteenth” revealed to him the world of natural science; the “twentieth” will probably bring to him a reconstructed history.

Since the author’s death, indeed while I have been arranging these rough notes, several learned works have appeared, bearing more or less directly upon early English History, Art, and Law.* The subjects of all these works are inferentially treated in this volume.

EDWARD A. PETHERICK.

STREATHAM,

June, 1903.

* “The History of English Law before the Time of Edward I.,” by Sir Frederick Pollock. Second Edition, with Chapter on the “Dark Age,” by Dr. Maitland. 2 vols. 1903. Cambridge Press.

“Traces of the Elder Faiths of Ireland,” by W. G. Wood-Martin. 2 vols. 1902. Longmans.

“Time Table of Modern History, A.D. 400 to 1870,” by M. Morrison. 1902. Constable.

“The Arts in Early England,” by G. Baldwin Brown. 2 vols. 1903. Murray.

“A Social History of Ancient Ireland,” by Dr. P. W. Joyce. 2 vols. 1903. Longmans.

THE RISE OF ENGLISH CULTURE.



GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

I.

ABOUT 400 years ago, according to the unanimous opinion of our historians, the foundations of our modern culture and institutions were laid. The invention or the recovery of the art of printing led to the gradual diffusion of useful knowledge, and the formation of habits of study among a limited but very powerful class; but at the same time it led to the propagation of great falsehoods and errors in respect to the past and actual condition of the world, which became part of our system of education, and which have remained in great measure uncorrected down to the present time. These still exert, in the opinion of many, a baneful influence upon our thoughts and habits by hindering us from seeing the world as it is, and our fellow-men as they actually are. There can be no clear understanding of the present state of society, and no well-directed effort for its improvement, unless we attend to what the men of letters were doing in the world about 400 years ago.

II.

I am attempting in the present work a re-examination of the legends relating to the Discovery of the World. For, in fact, our knowledge of the world in any adequate sense was but beginning at the time when the first bold navigators rounded the southern promontory of Africa, or sailed far westward of the Azores in quest of the New Orb. Gradually the truth stole into the general mind that the earth was not based on a plane surface, surrounded by an innavigable ocean, but was a sphere or ball, which might be surrounded in ships. Gradually the belief in the existence of monstrous forms of human or bestial life gave way before repeated and accurate reports from distant lands. Gradually the mind of Europe recovered from that hypertrophy of the imagination, from that delirium of the phantasy which had been stimulated by dreamers and sedentary recluses, and acquired courage to face the dangers of the visible, and to ignore the dangers of the invisible world.

III.

How can the study of the progress of human knowledge and of human endeavour during these four centuries be other than interesting; and not only so, but in the highest degree encouraging to all who believe in the still unexhausted resources and capabilities of our nature? It must indeed be the task, in some respects a painful one, of the modern historian, to expose many an illusion in reference to our traditional and imagined past. We are still, year by year, recovering from that over-fed and over-stimulated habit of imagination of which I have spoken. In other

words, we are recovering that habit of sane judgment which has been so long depressed in the interests of a blind and unquestioning faith. We begin to draw, more and more sharply, the line of discrimination between those mental representations which arise in listening to Church music and oratory, or in witnessing the drama of the stage, or in reading the poet's heroic verse; and those which arise from the experience of the more outside and commonplace world. The need in every branch of thought and inquiry is to separate fancy from fact. The need is to control the licences of the imagination, and to be controlled by the authority of the seen, the proved and the known. A judicious habit begins to prevail.

IV.

I desire to point out with more than usual emphasis, that the time preceding the Discovery of the World was a time of the grossest ignorance here in the West. The period we speak of vaguely as "The Middle Ages" is sometimes also called "The Dark Ages." An age being taken to mean one hundred years, it may be said that the fifteenth age, or century, is of all the darkest; and by contrast with it, the impressions we form of the sixteenth century are those of an extraordinary brilliance. Now, this is not altogether like the actual course of life and human affairs. Great movements are long preparing, and it is not in the nature of the case that great improvements should burst upon the world without notice or warning, as they appear almost to have done in the ordinary narratives of those times. The contrast between the last half of the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth is this:

that in the later period we can rely to some extent upon the testimony of witnesses of different parties and interests, as to what was actually happening in the world; but in the earlier period (I speak advisedly) you cannot call forth a single witness for examination and cross-examination in the usual judicial manner, upon what he has seen and heard of the actual condition of the world. The exceptions will be found to be apparent rather than real.

v.

I am well aware that this is a novel statement, and must appear to many who have not studied the subject astonishing. It can, however, be proved in a variety of ways. The shortest way is, perhaps, by pointing out that until recent times history is not an affair of contemporary testimony at all. It is because, under the influence partly of instinct, partly of education, we have persistently assumed the contrary, that errors so great in the study of "History" prevail to the present day.

We have been taught to believe that about 400 years ago, or a little more, books were printed and gradually *published*—*i.e.* made known to the public—which contained an authentic narrative of events in the world from the Creation downwards from the tongue or pen of a series of witnesses of those events. It is time to say that such a notion is quite baseless, and unworthy to be entertained by any truly educated or thoughtful person in the present day. The Creation of the World is a mystical or dream event. Creation itself is a figure of speech which does not satisfy the demands of thought; nor have our men of science yet succeeded in

defining the terms "Life" and "Genesis." No man can be witness of a creation, nor of any series of events deduced from such an event. The Chronicles which came to light after printing, and which had been penned by the literary men of the Moslem, the Jewish, and the Christian Churches, are not founded on testimonies of contemporary observers, but on efforts of the poetic and deductive imagination.

The like argument applies to a system of narratives, composed in Latin and in Greek, which profess to connect our modern culture with an event said to have occurred in the reign of the Roman Emperor Augustus. These narratives proceeded from the pens of the faithful servants of the Holy Roman Church. There are a great number of them; and in this principle of "History" they are all agreed. The principle is that an Incarnation of God occurred in the reign of Augustus, and that in the reign of his successor, God Incarnate suffered death at the hands of a Roman governor, under the instigation of an ecclesiastical conspiracy of the Jews. If, so late as 300 years ago, you asked one of these writers *when* exactly this event occurred, he would have said that it was not certain, that there had been a mistake of twenty-two years in the reckoning; but the event had occurred nearly 1600 years before his time. If you inquired further as to the sources of this opinion, he would admit that it had been handed down through the monasteries; and that the literary state of the monasteries was almost hopelessly obscure at the epoch of printing. This he would admit, were he an instructed and at the same time a candid man.

The Incarnation of God is a mystical event, and is not related to testimony, in the proper and usual

sense of the word, as we employ it in the courts of justice. It can be no more proved or disproved by what men say than the existence of a celestial or an infernal state. For, imagine that we have constituted a Forum of Letters to determine this question. We call up the Moslem. A tradition of the Son of Mary is part of his religious system. He denies the possibility of an Incarnation of God, and would abjure his faith if he admitted such an event. The Jew, dissenter from the Moslem in minor points, confirms in like manner the solemn negative of his fellow-believer in the pure spirituality or super-humanness of God. The monk alone insists upon his principle, because he is ordained and vowed to support it, with the whole system built upon it. There is a conflict of opinion, not of testimony. But if you inquire further how the story sprang up, that the Jewish ecclesiastics had conspired against the Founder of the Christian religion, the monk has no documents that will bear examination in proof, the Jew is wholly ignorant of any such tradition among his people, while the Moslem says that he alone has the authentic story of the Son of Mary, who was mere man, and that the story has been misrepresented to the world.

VI.

The question now arises, If neither a Creation nor an Incarnation are proper subjects of human testimony, where does testimony as to the events of the past properly begin? Of what event can we say, This is *proved* according to the ordinary rules of evidence—that is to say, by contemporary eye-witnesses, men able to observe and willing to report, if not *the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth*, at least

the substance of the important fact? The Moslems look back to the "Flight of the Prophet," and date downwards from it. Can they, then, point to contemporary witnesses of that event? On the contrary, when the rise of their literature is considered, and its nature, it will be seen that they began to write when their great period of struggle and conquest had long receded into the dim distance of enthusiastic fancy. The literature is much later than is commonly supposed, and is dictated by a brilliant effort of the imagination. When it was said, on the expulsion of the Moors from Spain, about 400 years ago, that they were entitled to that land by a possession of seven hundred long years, the statement rested on vague conjecture, like a number of other statements of the same kind, and in the like interest. We have no authentic narrative from any side of the time and the manner of their entrance into Spain, and of the succession of events from that time. It is sufficient to point out that their "history" is constructive, like that of all peoples, and that about 400 years ago the students of the West looked up to them as the leaders in all branches of culture.

VII.

I desire not to be prolix, and to leave much to the meditation of the intelligent reader. I am not writing for those who think it the part of wisdom to receive any fresh opinion with sneers and jeers, with exclamation and declamation; but for those who take an interest in the solution of intellectual and moral problems. Still, I have reason to believe that there are men of the higher character who have found a stumbling-block in what I have written; and it is a delight to me to

address my arguments to such men. Let me, then, point out that Testimony in the proper and ordinary sense of the word is the function of the individual, not of the corporation. If an embattled host of Moslems shout their war-cry in unison, "There is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is his Apostle," this is the manifesto of a military corporation, the expression of union and brotherhood among its members, the denunciation of its foes. It is the exertion of united wills, it is not testimony to fact. So of a hymn sung by a chorus of Monks in praise of the salutary virtue of the Cross, the recitation of the Creed or any "history" that has been merely learned by heart. It is among the unhappy abuses of ecclesiastical language that men should be called Martyrs who suffer not for being witness to what they have seen, but for adhering to a statement they have been taught to recite.

It will be found, when the subject is fully understood, that it is the grossest blunder on the part of any critical historian to treat the Chronicles which came to light after the invention of printing as if they contained the evidence of independent observers of the world. They were, on the contrary, the production of men who had been taught to agree upon a Dogma and a Fable; and though their manuscripts may be impressive upon the mind of the unwary reader, their opinion is of no more value than the opinion of a solitary man. If that opinion be once fairly challenged, and its foundation denied, the whole fabric falls to the ground.

VIII.

The reader may ask how it is that these points have been so long neglected, how it is that they have escaped

the attention of our most sceptical or thoughtful historians? There is a very instructive answer to this question. During the Revival of Letters, and the great rebellion against authority and dogma associated with the name of Martin Luther, there were brought to light some expressions of doubt, or even of contemptuous denial, in reference to the tales which came from the monasteries, the strength of which had never been surpassed. It was said that the accomplished Pontiff himself, Leo X., had avowed in a letter to a Cardinal that the Christian story was nothing but a fable profitable to the clergy. It was said that young wits in Rome had declared the story did not rest on authentic testimony, but on saintly tricks. It was said that a clerk in the Papal service, Laurence Valla, had exposed the falsehood of legends which were part and parcel of the system of ecclesiastical history—the legend of Epistles exchanged between Jesus and Abgarus, legends concerning the Apostles, legends concerning Constantine, legends concerning St. Isidore and his decretals. All these legends came from one and the same source, from the forge and writing-houses of Fable in the monasteries.

Why were these warnings forgotten, these denunciations disregarded? It was because dishonest fabulists were organized and disciplined in the use of the pen, as critical and honest men were not. It was because confederacies in falsehood do in this world constantly triumph over solitary integrity and worth. It was because, when men once renounce the virtue and independence of their souls for the sake of blind obedience in the interests of empire over the world, they bid farewell to the hope of dealing frankly and fairly by their fellow-men. It is because the uneducated multitude, ever "fiery hot for fable, and icy cold to truth,"

tacitly encourage their would-be rulers in the cultivation of the appetite for the absurd, the impossible, and the incredible.

IX.

Since the Revival of Letters, few have been the clergymen who have had the wit and the courage to expose and contradict the system of ecclesiastical fable. Beyond a certain point, a man in Holy Orders cannot proceed without facing the necessity of resigning his own position, or being guilty of at least gross inconsistency. Could we discover and bring to light a list of bishops and other dignitaries, who, having discerned in studious hours the rooted falsity of the whole system they had been vowed in youth to defend, renounced everything for truth's sake, they would indeed contribute a nobler Roll of Martyrs than any of whom the world has yet heard. But it seems human nature is not so constituted. It may delight in the idea of renunciation for the sake of an ideal Being; but in practice it feels itself unable to renounce material good for the sake of the most ideal and most majestic of beings, if so we may speak of Truth.

X.

Among the laymen who have dealt with "History," stands eminent one of the simplest and purest-minded of our countrymen, David Hume. Here was an admirable spirit, not to be deterred from telling what he believed to be the truth by rude obloquy, or by fear of poverty. He seems to have offended the absurd among his countrymen by insisting that our ancestors were in a very barbarous state until about 300 years

ago. He was in the right ; but how was it that a man who meditated so seriously the nature of Testimony, did not discover, as he advanced in his work, the still deeper barbarism and unculture of 400 years ago ? It is no uncommon thing for a man who is strong in his apprehension of general principles to be lax in his application of them. Hume did not bring his critique of human testimony to bear fully upon the documents of English history. He says in effect in one place that the name of Saint is synonymous throughout ages for mendacity, and he frequently scoffs at the nonsense and indecency of the monastic writers. But he never saw that he had to do with a literary conspiracy rather than with a number of distinct writers ; he did not investigate Chronology. Neither he nor Gibbon appear to have given attention to the remarkable assault on the part of certain Jesuit scholars upon the early or Benedictine Church Literature about 200 years ago.

There is a passage in Hume in which he points to the knowledge of classical literature enjoyed by the Monks. Had he made a wider study of the subject, he would have seen that the fact is an infallible index to the epoch of those writings, viz. the Revival of Letters. It can be shown beyond dispute from documents only brought to light during the lifetime of Hume, that culture was only beginning in any worthy sense among the men who had founded the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, during the reigns of the first princes of the House of Tudor. The like holds good of all the schools of the West ; but it is impossible to produce the evidence in this place, which lies in mass in the Annals of the Order of St. Benedict and its Literary History, which has never yet been examined with thorough critical attention.

XI.

It is time to speak more pointedly concerning the Order of St. Benedict. I have dwelt so much upon their literary efforts in a previous work that a Catholic writer has said of me, I have "Benedictines on the brain." A man who is constantly thinking of a particular subject may be said to have that subject on the brain. It is Modern History which I have at present on the brain; and I know that this subject cannot be understood without attention to the Benedictine system. The case stands thus: The whole of our Christian literature came to us from the hands of the hierarchy of the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church. The oldest family in that hierarchy is the Order of St. Benedict. The whole mystery of the literature lies with them. About 400 years ago they began to translate the Hebrew scriptures into Latin; and it should be well borne in mind that to Martin Luther (they say about the year 1503) the discovery of the complete Bible was as the discovery of a treasure hid in a field. I need not dwell upon the tales concerning the various editions of the Bible since the invention of printing. The fact is clear and indisputable that the general knowledge of the books was but beginning, whether within or without the monasteries, at the epoch to which I have so frequently referred; and that their previous history is utterly dark, so far as direct evidence is concerned, whether we inquire into the literary activity of the monasteries or of the Jewish synagogues. All the literature designed to illustrate the Bible—on the Jewish side, the Talmud, containing the writings of the "Fathers and Doctors" of the Synagogue; on the Christian side, the Patrology,

containing the corresponding writings of the Churchmen—slowly came to light during the sixteenth century. We shall not greatly err if we rest our minds on the year 1500 as that which roughly divides a *published* literature from a preceding *secret* literature.

XII.

Who was St. Benedict? He is a person entirely unknown outside the Cloisters where he was extolled—along with St. Basil, the Patriarch of Eastern monachism—as the great Patriarch and Lawgiver of the West. They say that St. Benedict was born not far from the time of Mohammed; even as the two systems of religion were rivals in the world at the time when the story was circulated. And even as the devout Moslem was taught to couple the name of his Prophet and Lawgiver with that of the Almighty, so the devout unlettered Christian of the West was taught to couple the name of St. Benet with that of Christ as Almighty God in prayer. It is a curious question for what reason the Abbots fixed upon the general name Benedict, which is the Latin rendering of the Divine Name (unutterable, they say, among the Jews), as the proper name of their ideal Head. The word “abbot” is of Hebrew origin, and it was a comparatively novel word in the ears of classical or humanist scholars of the early sixteenth century, as was the Summary of Christianity, the Rule ascribed to the pen of St. Benedict himself, but in reality the composition of the literary Abbots of the Order.

The Rule of St. Benet should be studied in close connection with the New Testament; and both should be studied as literature first *published* and known to

the general world during the period 1480-1520. It will then appear that the authors of these books are one and the same class of men. It will appear that they who discovered the idea of a Christ in the Hebrew writings different from the idea of the Messiah held by the Jews themselves, wrote the *Haggadah*, or allegory, of the Gospels in exposition of this idea. They who circulated the legend of the Incarnate God and his College of Twelve Apostles are they also who said that St. Peter and St. Paul had founded numerous churches in the West, that St. Joseph of Arimathæa had come to Glastonbury, St. Dionysius to Paris on a similar errand; and so on. Practically masters of the literary situation until the beginnings of a new literary criticism in the seventeenth century, the Abbots of the great Order were able to found their system firmly on the imagination of the world. There was a time when every Holy Father of a monastery, as the Rule shows, hailed as "Abba!" by his flock, was regarded as the vicar and proper mouthpiece of Christ.

The Orders which came into existence later than that of St. Benet are all to be regarded as scions of the parent-tree. If the Dominicans and Franciscans, who addressed themselves to the towns, while their elder brethren held the rural districts, allowed themselves to be some 700 years younger than the Benedictines, this is a mere figure of speech, which has a rough value as evidence of the fact that city life and institutions were relatively young compared with the lordly strongholds of the nobility and the clergy. Not one of the Orders, however, at that Era of Publication to which I have referred, could produce Registers by which the inquirer might trace them back to the beginning of their institution.

XIII.

Let me now invite attention to the question of Chronology. A Chronology originates in the impatience of darkness and vagueness in notions of the past, which are peculiarly painful to educated or reading people. It may be safely laid down that our ancestors, as Jack Cade says in Shakspeare, were content enough with the use of the score and the tally, until the appetite for the knowledge of Antiquity set in.

Time being a mental conception founded on experiences of the senses, we can only make a clear image of the Past from the analogy of measured and divided space. We think of descending the course of a stream when we advance from the early to the recent, or of ascending the stream when we seek to recover the earlier from the recent event. Or, we think of a climax, scale, or ladder, by which we seem to descend or ascend the length of a given period, the distance between each rung being (by the connection which has come down to us from the Revival of Letters) an age or period of one hundred years.

The question arises, at what epoch was this chronological scale laid down, and what is its value? Again, I would point the reader to the Era of Publication (about "1480-1520") in the accepted figure of speech. Our Christian Chronology is Benedictine Chronology, and, like everything else in the system, has claimed for it an imaginary antiquity, which disappears before evidence from the Era of Publication itself. The Benedictines say that the Chronology was laid down in the age of St. Benet himself by one of the Abbots—"Dionysius Exiguus," as they jestingly call him—who introduced the custom of computing time by the

years from the Incarnation. They say that some 500 years later, another member of the Order, Marian, the Scot or Irishman who was connected with the famous literary cloister of Fulda, discovered that there were twenty-two or twenty-three years' error in the calculation, and amended it accordingly.

Not to weary the reader with an unnecessarily elaborate exposure of this fable, the mere fact is, that it was not known to general scholars until about 300 years ago; one of the most illustrious of them, John Selden, says that he was the first to notice (on the credit of the story) that the Chronology needed correcting by the twenty-two years. The study of Chronology, as distinguished from the invention of it, is a sixteenth-century study; and the name of Joseph Scaliger marks a beginning. The invention of it cannot, I believe, be traced higher than about 400 years ago. A large number of early printed books are without date; a large number have been ante-dated for interested reasons; therefore we can only form the opinion, from this branch of the evidence, that the custom of dating documents by the Christian scheme had not become general at the time of the establishment of the printing presses.

Again, in writings of the Monks, which may be referred to about the same time, the habit is discovered of dating by the year of an Abbot or of a Pontiff, or a king designated vaguely, *e.g.*, "Edward," without specifying *what* Edward. I need allude merely to the trouble thus occasioned to an industrious inquirer like Mr. Thorold Rogers, who is a strong, though it seems unconscious witness, to the lateness of any authentic Registers. The "Paston Letters," again, ignored the habit of dating by Christian years, though they recognize the anniversary feasts of the Church.

Again, in writers during the Era of Publication, there is great diversity in the habit of dating the year. It is the "year of Salvation," the "year of human Salvation," or the "year of the Virgin's delivery," or of "the Incarnation," or of "the Nativity," or "from the natal day of Christ," or the number of the year is simply given. I have not been able to ascertain when the important abbreviation A.D. or A.C. came into use; but it was hardly before the sixteenth century. Upon this point the reader may usefully consult some statements in Father Germon (of the Jesuits) in the controversy with the Benedictines about 200 years ago, to which I have before referred.

The intelligent student will at once grasp the importance of these conclusions. If the custom of dating by years and centuries came in about 400 years ago, and very uncertainly even then, the documents supposed to have been written before that time cannot be used as good evidence of events. The higher rungs of our chronological ladder prove to be merely imaginary; and we find ourselves in the darkness preceding the Epoch of Publication without means of knowledge of what had been occurring in the world, unless public impressions and vague conjectures from what sixteenth-century writers tell us, may be dignified with the name of knowledge. The reader will begin to understand how it is that the narratives of the conquest over the Moors in Spain, the expulsion and dispersion of the Jews from their beloved settlements in Spain; the voyages of the Portuguese and the Spaniards are full of chronological discrepancies, as well as devoid of all fullness and accuracy of details. It must ever be so in a state of life where not even annual Registers of events were faithfully kept, and some bare outline of fact is all that invention and fancy can build upon.

If we turn to the Jewish men of letters, our means of exact knowledge are hardly improved. It is not, I believe, held by competent critics among the Jews that their calendarists and chronologers had completed their system until some comparatively short time before or after the terrible Spanish persecution. Few indeed are the Jewish historians of what I have called the Era of Publication; and when you separate from their writings what they have learned from some knowledge of the Gentile chronicles, slight indeed is the material of reminiscence or record in Jewish families. Their chronologers RR. Zacuto and Ganz, both sixteenth-century writers, have in reality no scale by which to ascend through the darkness of the past; they have merely the mystical theory that deduces events from the Creation, to which they had first mystically reckoned back by a series of "Days" or periods of a thousand years. The Mohammedans had a similar theory of the religious Day as equivalent to a thousand years. They, however, made the world several thousand years older than the Jews. The reason for these differences we need not discuss; it suffices for the present purpose to point out that the Chronologies are none of them founded on Registers, but on guess-work and ecclesiastical dream, and afford evidence mainly of the dream-life of the enthusiastic members of the different corporations.

XIV.

Now, where no Registers are kept, and there is no exact Chronology, men's notions of distance in time must necessarily be extremely vague. The duration of objects of human art, and of human life itself is but roughly guessed at; and in this ignorance, love or pride

or ambition are always at work, inducing an exaggerated notion of antiquity. Registers of births and deaths do not appear to have been kept until after the Council of Trent, perhaps were not generally kept until the beginning of the seventeenth century.

XV.

It was known, perhaps, only to the observant few what the average duration of a man's life actually was. And the vulgar could and did believe that it might frequently extend to 100 or 150 years. Although a Hebrew Psalmist gives the limit as 70 or 80 years according to his actual experience, so imposing is vast, imagined, and unrecorded distance upon the imagination, he might find no difficulty in patriarchal longevity of several centuries' duration. In our popular English Chronicles, published during the sixteenth century as "History," you will find many illustrations of these false and absurd notions both as to Size and as to Duration. The reader is calmly invited to believe that in far distant times, men possessed teeth many inches in length and lived habitually to see many hundred summers. These are not to be regarded merely as bold lies invented for a lie-loving audience; they appealed to a state of belief and taste no longer possible in a newspaper-loving age. The zest for tales concerning Size and Duration is now dying out, or dead.

XVI.

It has been obviously objected to me, "You say that the monastic or Christian literature is at least 1000 years younger than it has been declared to be. How can such an extraordinary deception or illusion

have been possible?" The answer is: That when books were rare, and prized on the mere ground of a real or supposed antiquity, which men had no means of measuring, anything could be asserted, anything believed, and nothing could be contradicted. The Jews have a well-known book on the Creation. When it was brought to light (probably not before the Revival of Letters) the question would be asked: "How old is this book?" "It is very old." "How old?" "Perhaps of the time of Abraham." "Surely that is too old?" "Well, then, perhaps it is of the time of the emperor Hadrian." Neither the one statement nor the other amounts to more than a vague figure of speech.

When, from the jealous seclusion of the Monasteries the writings ascribed to St. Jerome were produced at the Era of Publication, and it was said, "These writings are more than 1000 years old," the statement could not be authoritatively contradicted, although, doubtless, by a few classical scholars it was entirely disbelieved. It was gradually found to be useless to argue with the masters of a legion of subservient penmen. A chorus noisily affirmed what but a solitary had here and there the courage and the knowledge to deny. The bold pretension so passed into accepted convention; although there was not a scholar who could trace the transmission of books downwards from 1000 years before the erection of the printing presses. The statement merely amounts to this, "The writings are very old, that is, in our chronological scheme, 1000 years old and more." It was received because the assertors were masters of the literary situation, and on no other ground.

But during these 400 years we have gained, and

are always gaining, conquests over the vague or indefinite imagination by a variety of more defined experiences. And the scholar is now guilty of rashness or idle conceit who serenely says, "I see no reason to doubt that the Hieronyman writings were composed a long thousand years before the people knew anything of the Bible." For he assumes that he can penetrate an obscurity which no scholar of the Revival was able to penetrate. The cautious and sober critic, on the other hand, has great advantages over the critic of the Revival, because so many things that were once secret have become fully known, so many things once whispered in the ear have been published on the house-top. We have all imbibed and absorbed, more or less, the human experience of the last 400 years, and are able to look over the shoulders of a Bacon and a Selden, a Polydore Vergil, or Erasmus, or Luther, or a Laurence Valla. We have greater knowledge of our early ignorance. We can now perceive that the reason why scholars so willingly yielded to the spell of "St. Jerome" is because they had no "fourth or fifth century" taste, but a "sixteenth-century taste." Jerome (says Dr. Westcott, the present Bishop of Durham)* writes like a sixteenth-century scholar. He is so, indeed. The Jesuits are sixteenth-century men; and they say that Luther was the spiritual child of St. Austin. Naturally, he was an Austin friar. Not that it could be proved that St. Austin, dead a thousand years ago, rose again in the person of the reforming friar. They say that St. Austin was the spiritual child of St. Paul; not that it could be proved that St. Paul had deceased from the world 400 years before St. Austin. These

* Written June, 1891.—E. A. P.

literary saints existed for the purposes of chronological literary catalogues, brought to light at the Era of Publication. The Pauline, the Augustinian, the Lutheran doctrines made a noise in the world at the same time. I fail to trace the principle of Justification by Faith beyond Luther; it is, in fact, the innovation of his time.

After all the discussion which has gone on in recent years upon the Wiclevian writings, it can be no rashness to assert that there was no talk of John Whitecliff and his connection with Bohemia until the eve of the great Schism; that there was no talk of either of the "Wiclifs" until the reign of Henry VIII.; that the name is allegorical and ideal, significant of the strong body of reformers in certain colleges and religious houses.

XVII.

The possibility of attaining an "insight into former times" is the possibility of constructing for ourselves a mental telescope. A mental telescope must be constructed from the lenses of the eyes of contemporary observers. We must "borrow the spectacles" of a good observer for a view of any particular period of the past. It will be found that such good observers are very rare, and hard to find; because the power to see what actually is, and then faithfully to report it, implies high intellectual and moral qualities. A man must have the taste for Science, as distinct from the taste for Fable, and he must be at fair liberty to gratify it. Such a man was Francis Bacon, in the morning of our English culture. Whatever might be urged as to the bias under which even he wrote, there

can be no question that a better witness cannot be cited as to the state of letters and science in our world at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Let us for a moment, then, look through his eyes, and learn something of the state of Historic knowledge during the age that had passed.

Bacon, in the "Advancement of Learning," relates History to Memory, which implies that it was something to be recited and got by heart, like the plot or argument of a fable. He divides Theology into Church History, Parables, and Precept. Prophecy, he says, is a super-numerary part, and is simply "divine history before the fact." So that by a simpler classification, Church Precept may be clothed in three forms—History, Parable, and Prophecy—which are substantially the same. But he has another division. History, he says, is National, Civil or Ecclesiastical, and Literary. Of these the three first are extant, but the fourth is defective. Bacon does not note that all these branches had been in the hands of clergymen, and of them alone.

But on Literary History he makes the important observation that the general state of learning from age to age has never been described. For want of this, "the History of the World seemeth to me to be as the statue of Polyphemus with his eye out, that part being wanting which doth most show the spirit and life of the person." Bacon does not add, that without such a history of Letters the student cannot see any statue at all. He goes on to say that in particular sciences there have been set down *some small memorials of the schools, authors, and books*, also *some barren relations touching the invention of arts and usages*. But "a just story of learning" in all its branches is still wanting. He

appears to feel that there is no history in the proper sense of the word without this previous story of Letters. The fact is, that it could not have been written in his time, nor until the time of the Benedictines of St. Maur.

XVIII.

Again, Bacon divides "Just and Perfect History" into Chronicles, or representations of a Time, Lives of Persons, and Narrations or Relations of actions. He deploras the unworthy manner in which the History of England has been written and the partiality and obliquity in the latest History of Scotland. There is great need of *one* history of the Island. If the period from the "Uniting of the Roses" to the "Uniting of the Kingdoms" were only adequately written! Bacon, it will be recalled, did attempt a history of the Reign of Henry VII.; but it will be found that he did not, because he could not, add a word of genuine information respecting that king which had not been written down by Polydore Vergil near a hundred years before his time.

Bacon knew that it required uncommon ability to write good History. He is a witness to the fact that it was impossible for the ablest man to write it, simply because "actions memorable" had not been "tolerably reported as they passed." If this state of things, of which Bacon is not the only witness, had been duly noted by students since his time, there would not have been so great a waste of art on the subject of English History, or of Church History in general. Bacon is embarrassed in referring to Church History. He appears to hint that it is artificial. There is abundance of it, "*only*," he sighs, "*I would*

the virtue and sincerity of it were according to the mass and quantity." Did he say to himself that it was a branch of Poesy, that is, "*nothing else but feigned history which may be styled as well in prose as in verse,*" and that its use was to give "*some shadow of satisfaction to the mind of man in those points wherein the nature of things doth deny it?*"

XIX.

Let me come to the name of another Englishman who is justly held to be one of the great ornaments of our nation; an Englishman of the highest quality for the task of the historian, who attempted to supply that *desideratum* of "Literary History" so keenly felt by the great scholar of King James's time. I refer to Henry Hallam, whose works remain, the monument of his industry, patience, his noble and disinterested zeal for truth and liberty. With deep respect for the memory of Hallam, I have to point out a serious, though not singular, defect in his account of the "Literature of Europe" after the decay of the Roman empire. The defect lay in this, that Hallam never gave special attention to the analysis of Monastic Literature—that is, the Benedictine Literature; and appears to have been unaware of the extent to which suspicion had overclouded that Literature from the end of the age illustrated by the name of Bacon.

Hallam betook himself to the modern Benedictine "Literary History of France," and to other compilations of the writings of the Order; and he accepted their chronology as if it had been founded on record. He repeats the fable that "Isidore of Seville" and "Cassiodorus" flourished in the "general ignorance"

of the "sixth century." That ignorance, he believes, continued for about five long ages. He says that St. Benedict bade his brethren "read, copy, and collect books," but was "silent as to their nature." He alludes to the tales of monastic culture in Ireland, to the tales about "Alcuin" and "Bede" and the "Cathedral Schools under Charlemagne." He arrives at the "intellectual night" of the "tenth century." He comments on the "want of genius," the "prevalance of bad taste," the "deficiency of poetical talent" during the "Dark Ages." But he does not inquire as to the possibility of writing a story of such ages. He holds to the faint clue supplied by the Fathers of St. Maur to the rise of the universities and the scholastic philosophy, the beginnings of modern poetry, and so on. But unfortunately, he leaves the all-important question as to the rise of a reading or writing class among the laity unexplored. Again, he copies unverified and unveracious statements from the Benedictines upon this subject, and brings the sketch of some 900 years in his first chapter to an unsatisfactory close amidst still dense ignorance. He was not aware that he had been contemplating an imaginary retrospect, which had only come fully into view since the time of Bacon.

The Benedictine "Literary History of France" reveals, when critically examined, the collaboration of the monks in Normandy with those in England in the writing of the plausible tales connecting the fortunes of the two peoples. It is true that Hallam could not make much of the tales about "Lanfranc" and "Anselm," but he supposes that "John of Salisbury" marks some advance in education at the end of the "eleventh century." He is willing to trace a little further improvement in the next age. Yet, when he comes to the "thirteenth

century," he points out the "incredible ignorance" of elementary grammar in the writers assigned to that period. "Roger Bacon is not a good writer." "The MSS. of these latter ages before the invention of printing, are by far the most numerous, but they are the most incorrect and generally of little value." Hallam did not perceive that this age and its literature is still imaginary. He passes on to the next.

"The fourteenth century was not in the slightest degree superior to the preceding ages. France, England, and Germany were wholly destitute of good Latin scholars." The writer called "Richard Aungerville of Bury," poor as he is (in the estimate of Hallam), does not belong to this age. He is another masked Benedictine, and belongs in all probability to the early Tudor period. That a library was bequeathed by him to Oxford is a mere fable, as also the statement about a Royal library of 900 volumes at Paris.

xx.

Still adhering to the Benedictine scheme of "Centuries," Hallam nevertheless finds that in Italy the ignorance was very great in the middle of the fourteenth century, so that "a man, supposed to be learned, took Plato and Cicero for poets." But we come to the name of Petrarch, "the first real restorer of polite letters," the aspirant after pure Latin. The question arises, When did the writings ascribed to Petrarch the clerk first come into reading? Hallam, copying his dates from the compilers, has not raised the question. If he had done so, he would have seen how slight were the grounds for crediting the existence of the writings and of the tale about the Scholar long

before Erasmus. Not a book from the library which Petrarch is said to have collected, and to have left behind him, has come down to us. Although the tradition about Petrarch comes to us from sixteenth-century scholars, like Corterius, their Lists of Learned Men were contrived on a similar system. Their general principle was that classical learning revived in Italy towards the end of the fourteenth century. It was vague guess-work eked out by invention.

XXI.

Let me follow Hallam a little way in his discussion of the state of Letters in the "fifteenth century." Italy was undoubtedly in advance of the rest of Europe; yet our Historian sees clearly that not until the latter half of that age did good Latin set in. Our information as to the lives of scholars like Poggio and Valla is still vague and in great part made up of general conjecture. I would invite the reader to remember that it was only as monarchic institutions were beginning, and the foundations of civilization were being slowly laid, that what Hallam calls the "barbarous jargon" of monks gave way to the refined rhetoric of the Latin humanists. The "jargon" denotes the first efforts of monks in Latin composition. But the Latin Bible texts show a gradual improvement; and the best "historic compositions" of the monks date, all of them, from the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century.

Well may Hallam speak of the Resuscitation of the Greek language in Italy as "a very important event in Literary History." The scattered traces which he believed he found of the study of Greek in the monasteries during the "Middle Ages" are not real;

they are merely fictions of the Benedictine who writes as "Bede," and others of the same fraternity, who were beginning to push their writings into the light during the reign of Henry VIII. Polydore could find only two copies of "Gildas" about the year 1525, and his copy of "Bede" was imperfect. Greek is here seen to be in its infancy as a study. Hallam, however, still turning the pages of the "Literary History of France," cites some legends of the monasteries of St. Dionysius the Areopagite (St. Denis) and St. Germain des Près in Paris, of the monasteries of St. Gall and of Cologne, of St. Albans, and so on. He appears to half believe them; but would wholly have discredited them had he seen that it was part of the system to "give the air of more learning than was actually possessed" to these noted seats of monastic culture.

Among the incredibilities copied by Hallam is the story of Italian universities founded in the fourteenth century, and immediately dying out; of decrees for the establishment of professorships of Greek and Oriental tongues, which "remained a dead letter;" and the existence of some ten persons in Italy who could read Homer in the time of Petrarch. At last Hallam fixes on the arrival of Chrysoloras in Italy late in the fourteenth century as "the true epoch of the Revival of Greek Literature." But the date of Chrysoloras has never been correctly given: for the simple reason, unknown to Hallam, that the Humanists of the sixteenth century who make these statements were only beginning to use the system of dating by the years from the Incarnation; and that, no Registers having been kept, it was little more than guess-work when they said "Greek was revived about 100 years ago." They were, however, well aware that there was "no Greek in Western

Europe during the Middle Ages." Our chief authority, L. Aretino, says, in an oft-quoted sentence, that Greek had been lost in Italy for 700 years before Chrysoloras; in other words, according to this compute, 700 to 1400.

I would call pointed attention to this saying. It was easy to write down the phrase "700 years;" but it may be well asked what reason the scholars of the Revival had for assuming this great, this terrible chasm in the life of culture. That the beautiful speech of Homer and of Plato, which gives (in the words of Gibbon) "a soul to the objects of sense, and a body to the abstraction of philosophy," should have fallen dead during a period hardly comprehensible by the imagination of man—a period of which, I have again and again observed, the story has never been truly or even approximately told! There is here a great illusion, the origin of which it may be possible to explain.

A corresponding statement was that of the Moors when they said in the time of Ferdinand and Isabella, "We have been 700 years and more in Spain, and we have a title to the land." It is the interested statement of a people whose culture had not very long begun, and who had the usual motives to exaggerate their claims to antiquity. It was the Moslem scholars who led the way in the revival of Greek, and it was they who were primarily responsible for this notion of the extinction of the old Græco-Roman culture during the period of their domination in Europe. There can be no doubt whatever that the period has been guessed rather than recorded, and that the supposed rapidity of the Moslem conquests in Africa and Spain, with the long endurance of their dominion, are ideas that have been derived from poetic retrospection and legendary

narrative. Their dominion was no doubt long ; but the probability of the case would be satisfied were we to assume that two or three centuries of barbarism had elapsed between the Arab conquest of the Mediterranean and the capture of Constantinople by the Turks. Nor can we explain to ourselves the enthusiasm with which the Italian scholars addict themselves to Latin and Greek at the epoch of the Revival, had those tongues been so strange and dead as they are supposed on the conventional theory to have been.

XXII.

I have lingered with Hallam because of the eminence of the man, and because of the strict and lawyer-like habit he constantly shows of carefully weighing evidence. If a man like this made an unsatisfactory report on the state of Letters in Europe before the Era of Publication, it was because, like compilers much less careful, he did not narrowly enough examine the few writers from whom the statements originally proceeded ; whether they were monks or classical enthusiasts—two classes of men between whom there was little sympathy. Let me close by referring to his treatment of a scholar whose significance has never been duly appreciated as a critic of the Monks, viz. Laurence Valla, the Latin scholar and humanist. Hallam sees that this scholar, in his declamation against the “ Donation of Constantine ” and the Temporal Power of the Pope, is in effect an ally of Luther, and writes in the same violent strain. Had the slight story of Valla’s life which refers him to the fifteenth century been neglected, and the date of the publication of his writings been attended to (about 1543) it would have been seen that beneath the mask

of "Laurence Valla" is in fact hidden an ally of the Reformers. In the same way the statement in the work on the "Elegances of Latin" to the effect that these classical principles are novel, and that for "many ages" none had been able to speak or to read Latin is only fully appreciated when you trace it to a writer of the earlier sixteenth century. It may be too strong, and yet it cannot be much weakened, for it is the unanimous witness of the more competent men of the time.

To Valla also are ascribed the earliest notes on the Greek Testament, which was not, as Hallam believed (in compliance with the Church tradition), the original text of the canonical writings. Now, Valla, though competent to feel the many inelegancies of the Latin version, has been shown to have had but slight knowledge of Greek. To later scholars it appeared that he had by no means the perfection even in Latin, for which he might have taken credit to himself amidst the barbarism and ignorance which prevailed around him.

If among the enthusiasts for classical purity, few as they were, and all too fulsome as they were in their mutual admiration, such was the state of things 400 years ago, the accurate student may judge how it fared in the monasteries, in which men were labouring not to lead, but merely not to lag behind the beginning march of education. The best Latin and Greek writing ascribed to the "Fathers" is contemporary with or later than Valla; nor is there any reason to suppose that the oldest and rudest manuscripts of portions of the Latin Gospels date from very many decades before the rise of such Humanists as the notable man whom we salute as the enemy of fictions in the monastic and Papal interest.

XXIII.

I have thus endeavoured to prepare the mind of the reader for a fresh consideration of the evidence, and for a conclusion which must come upon the unprepared mind with a shock of surprise. The "Histories" put forward by the monks at the Epoch of Publication were none of them narratives based upon authentic records of the past; they were plausible inventions, agreeable to the sentiments of the classes for whom they were written. The monks knew the actual state of the world; they were interested above all things in the dominion and glory of their own Order. In the utter ignorance which prevailed, and in the all-but-perfect immunity from contradiction on the part of outsiders, until the great Schism occurred, they traced up the rise of the Church to causes in the far-distant past. They fixed on certain epochs, from which they dated beginnings, and again new beginnings. They gradually revealed a long imaginary retrospect to the mind of their readers. They worked, consistently with their rule, in collaboration; they distributed the task of filling in the great scheme among different members. They thus produced an impression of great mass and of general consistency of plan, amidst many and often designed discrepancies, similar to that produced by their architecture. They subjugated the imagination of the world. Some resistance was made to their impositions on the part of scholars of a better taste for the truth, which proved ineffectual under the conditions of the time, and the passionate credulity which prevailed in all classes. The compilers of the monastic inventions have far outnumbered the critics, and have, in the eyes of the unthinking, overwhelmed them. And if

faith in the monks is now generally giving way, it is less due to the efforts of solitary men of ability and character than to the insensible prevalence of habits of thought which are incompatible with faith. Such in brief is the truth concerning English Story and in general the Story of the West, as it began to be told, about 400 years ago.

XXIV.

I might detain the reader at great length in noticing a large number of distinguished men, who, from the Tudor period down to that of the Fathers of St. Maur, and since, have busied themselves in compiling, without understanding, the writings of the old Benedictines. But it may be of some interest if I refer to a few names of writers who lived in our own times. The Comte de Montalembert has given a very interesting review of Benedictine legends in his voluminous work on the Monks of the West. He entered upon his task with a strong sentiment of reverence and sympathy towards the founders of Christianity; he approached its close, as I believe, with some weariness, and with something like disgust at the avarice and ambition of men who had arrogated to themselves the character of "men of God" and friends of the poor. The stern censures of so devout and so believing a man—for he appears to credit their miracles in the most childlike spirit—are exceedingly impressive. But whatever high qualities we expect and find in the work of M. de Montalembert, the critical investigation of his sources was to him an impossibility; nor is there a word of authentic record to be found from beginning to end of his volumes.

Our countryman, Dean Milman, was a man of enlightened and philosophic mind. He too, in his "Latin Christianity," addressed himself to the laborious compilation of Benedictine tales. It is a work tedious to peruse, which leaves upon the truly aroused and attentive reader the impression of the utter unlikelihood of the whole series of the lives of the Popes, by which it was sought to fill up the vast space of 1500 years. He will say to himself, with the experience of these ages since the Era of Publication, or of human and ecclesiastical nature in general, that things never did and never could go on in that perpetual see-saw of progression and retrogression in this mundane scene. Milman did not investigate his sources. He did not ask himself, *When* were these lines written? The scholar who sets himself seriously to answer that question, and makes a speciality of the Papal biographies, will, I doubt not, arrive at the firm conclusion that not one of these biographies was attempted long before the time of Platina and of Stella, and that they have all been written upon the poetical basis and the deductive principle.

A German scholar of high merit, who lately passed from us, Ferdinand Gregorovius, has also left behind him a voluminous compilation on the "History of Rome in the Middle Ages." He rested mainly on the same Benedictine legends; and though writing as the friend of freedom and secular culture, was unable to strike at the root of the ramified fictions of the Order. Yet the views of the state of Letters which Gregorovius attempts at the close of each century are valuable to the critical student. Here, as in the corresponding pages of Hallam, you observe that after bursts of culture and bright gleams of awakening intelligence, darkness

recurrently sets in, so that at the end of the fifteenth century the world appears scarce nearer to culture than it was after the calamities which are said to have occurred one thousand or five hundred years before. Once more the "Middle Ages" are perceived to be no less a dream than any other temporal scheme of the fall and recovery of man.

The proper use to make of Gregorovius, as of all the compilers, is to begin with his last volume, and thoroughly to digest the evidence there collected, which shows how impossible it was for the scholars of the early sixteenth century to ascend with certain footsteps through even the dark age that had gone before, much less through any preceding time.

XXV.

To those who are aware of the necessity of taking a wide view for the purpose of understanding these matters, it will not seem impertinent if I refer to some masters in the art of historic fiction who have shed some sidelights on the nature of "History." Let me name Henry Fielding as the founder of a new manner of writing, expressly based on the close study of human nature. It may be that his characters and scenes are no longer to our taste; but there can be no question of their fidelity to his time, nor of the conscientious intentions of the artist. Fielding was an admirable critic of human nature, and therefore of "History." Such a man will aid us to understand by contrast the unreality of the Romancers of the Monasteries.

Fielding points us to the "prodigious variety" in human nature, and freely scoffs at "the centuries of monkish dullness when the world seems to have been

asleep." He is conscious of the power to foretell action from character, and scarce refrains from the boast that he, as the student of human nature, is the earliest of our historians. "Truth distinguishes our writings from those idle romances, which are filled with monsters, the productions, not of nature, but of distempered brains." He will discuss with his readers the probability of some of his incidents, so anxious is he to keep close to the "vast authentic book of Nature." He lays down rules, which few who have thought themselves serious historians have carefully regarded. He will reject every circumstance "which, though never so well attested, he must be well assured is false." Thus he may fall into the marvellous, but never into the incredible. Ironically, he draws the contrast between himself as a "private historian" and the public historian who is supported by "records" when he portrays men "so very good and so very bad." He believes not in these extremes, nor in the sudden conversions of the bad into the good in popular drama.

Fielding refers to the universal contempt cast upon historical writers, who do not draw their material from records, and in so doing he slights "English History." He refuses to call his work a Romance for that reason. He has good authority for all his characters, "no less indeed than Doomsday Book!" He lavishes satire upon the pedants who have passed all their time in colleges and among books, and who are incompetent historians, because they have not conversed in the world with human nature as it is. He has never in the world met with the "model of perfection," nor with the monster unredeemed by a single virtue. He flatly denies that virtue is the certain road to happiness, and vice to misery in this world.

Again and again the contempt with which he regards "Alderman History" and "Monsieur Romance" breaks out. It seems clear that he, with a taste so severely educated for Truth, looked upon our History as a series of dull conventional tales, "which certain droll authors have been facetiously pleased to call the History of England." The criticism of Fielding may be "sweeping," but much nonsense still needs to be swept from the memory and imagination of the world.

One of the greatest of all literary artists, Sir Walter Scott, has not only devoted two of his novels to the delineation of the life of a Benedictine monastery at the time of the Reformation; he has in other works drawn freely from the monastic legends. Sir Walter employed the soft and pleasing colours of which he was so great a master, to illustrate the better aspects of the life of the monasteries; he protests against the harsh and partial judgment against them so commonly to be heard. The "Abbot" and the "Monastery" may, perhaps, be regarded as the best apologies on behalf of the Monks ever written. Yet Scott was too extensively and too accurately read in his subject to represent any great learning as the property of the Monasteries at the time of the Reformation, or at any preceding period. He was well aware that any writing or reading class, whether within or without the cloisters, was of the smallest extent; a fact which, if it had been duly noted, would have saved much waste of labour in the study of English History.

Honoré de Balzac, whose carefully laboured fictions produce a deeper effect of reality upon the reader than any ordinary history, has sketched in one of his novels, "Les Paysans," the portrait of a renegade and dis-frocked Benedictine of our day. He presents the man

as a Type in French provincial life. It is no pleasing picture—the avarice, the hypocrisy, the greed and gluttony of one who has learned the science of egoism in the cloister. “Profound as a monk, silentious as a Benedictine in historical labours, tricky as a priest, dissimulant as every miser, keeping always within the limits of the law, this man would have been Tiberius at Rome, Richelieu under Louis XIII., Fouché, had he been ambitious enough to go to the Convention. But he had the wisdom to be a lowly Lucullus, a voluptuous miser.” Balzac notes the insect-like patience, due to the need of observing decorum and reserve, which characterized those who had been under the ecclesiastical discipline of the Monasteries, and who came forth into the world at the time of the Revolution. The discipline was long descended; and not vainly will the reader attend to the description of so consummate an observer of life as the French novelist, if he desires to understand the mind of the men who took upon themselves the task of writing French and English History about 400 years ago.

CHAPTER I.

THE RISE OF THE ORDER OF ST. BENEDICT.

I AM asking the reader to plant himself in imagination at the epoch when the Printing Press had been set up in England, when the field of Bosworth had been fought, and Henry Tudor had been raised to the throne of England. Before that time the country had been distracted by the strife of factions known as the "Wars of the Roses," of which we know little more than the mere name. It has been noticed by our historians how dark that period is, or, in other words, how devoid we are of good sources of information. In fact, a wall of darkness seems to rise behind the faintly outlined figure of Henry and the fiend-like Richard, which shuts in the view of the observer, and hides from him the earlier past. This is not a mere phenomenon of English history; it is a phenomenon of the history of the West, the causes of which I now proceed to trace.

What are the great, the massive monuments of our English past? The answer is, They are the great Minsters built and once occupied by the Order of St. Benedict, at Canterbury and Westminster, and many other old seats of Catholic religion. And what is the age of these Minsters? No definite answer has hitherto been given to that question.

The
Minsters
(Monas-
teries).

And is it not a remarkable circumstance that these splendid ecclesiastical palaces should have been reared and improved at so vast a cost of labour and of gold, and no authentic record of their origin should have come down to us? There are, it is true, tales and tales on the part of the monks, of how and when their churches were dedicated, tales of previous wooden buildings, tales of fires and of Danish devastations, and the like; but not a single record that would satisfy the modern statistician, or the architect and builder who feels a pride in all the details of his art. Though our imagination in this obscurity imposes upon us, and we acquiesce in the sense of mystery, our intelligence teaches us that a common-sense explanation must be found for the rise of these buildings.

They were reared by men who honoured the sign of the Cross; these men formed one of the most superb Hierarchies the world has ever known, and they had at their disposal a large portion of the land and its revenue. But they have not stated, except in a fabulous and allegorical way, the manner in which they became Domini, or lords, in England, and acquired the wealth which is represented in these astounding documents of their ambition. I am assuming for the moment, what I shall later hope to prove, that there exists no contemporaneous history of the foundation of Westminster or any other Benedictine foundation in Europe. If this be so, then it is obvious that these ecclesiastical palaces were designed, and for the most part completed, before it occurred to the monks that it was necessary to write histories, or what were to pass as histories, of them. If this be so, the acquisition of land and wealth and power was long the ambition of the Order before they addressed themselves to the task of general literature.

When did the monks of the order of St. Benedict arrive on these shores? On that question the whole question of the origin of Christendom may be made to hinge; because there is every reason to believe that they came hither not much later than their settlement in France; and that they were in France soon after their establishment in Italy. They were, in their flourishing days, a highly militant, missionary, and aggressive body. Their earliest cloisters, they say, were Subiaco and Monte Cassino, "the Sinai of the new Dispensation" in the Campagna. These places are consecrated by the ideal association with St. Benedict, Father of all monks, Patriarch and Law-giver of the West, mythical head of a new Dispensation, whose Rule was declared by Bossuet to be a Summary of Christianity. Undoubtedly, we, who have been bred in Christianity, must contemplate with a certain veneration the monks and nuns of the first and most dignified of all the Christian families. Beyond them it is idle to search in any part of the world for primitive Christians.

It is now time to say that the ideas relating to the coming of the Benedictines to England are involved in absurdity and contradiction. Their dogma is that St. Benet himself was nearly a contemporary with Mohammed in the sixth century of their era. Therefore Benedictines could not have been here or in any part of the West earlier than that age, according to their own dogma. But there is a story that St. Joseph of Arimathæa came and planted Christianity at Glastonbury in the first century. It is a Benedictine story pure and simple, and could not have been circulated until they began to teach Christianity in Britain. The story of the British convert, King Lucius, in the second

Coming of
the Bene-
dictines.

century, comes also from the Benedictines. And if these tales are no longer believed by any sensible person, the credit of the Benedictines is entirely gone, because these inventions are the foundation of their traditional system.

The belief, however, is still widely diffused that St. Augustine came hither with a body of monks at the instigation of Pope Gregory late in the sixth century. The tale is again purely of Benedictine origin, as M. de Montalembert, in his work on "The Monks of the West," pointed out. Not only so; but St. Augustine and Pope Gregory are purely ideals of the Benedictine imagination, as will appear from a consideration of the literary evidence. The epoch of their coming to England has therefore yet to be discussed.

Some of our scholars, particularly Mr. Soames, have distinguished themselves by the theory that they came in with St. Dunstan, that is, in the tenth century. That age is called the Obscure or Dark Age in their system. It is the age when all manner of incredible things are being done in Rome and elsewhere, and the world is supposed to be drawing to an end. This obscure age turns out, with St. Dunstan himself, to be the creation of Benedictine artists in retrospective fiction, who sat down in the Scriptoria of the monasteries many ages later. The Benedictines were not in England in the tenth century, for they were not in existence in any part of the world.*

They pretend that they instigated Crusades in the eleventh century; and the twelfth century they designate the Scholastic Age, which they decorate with writings ascribed to a number of ideal schoolmen. Once

St. August-
tine a
Benedictine
ideal.

Also St.
Dunstan,
Lanfranc,
Anselm.

* William of Malmesbury and the rest of the Benedictine chorus who write on St. Dunstan, were not known till the sixteenth century.

more, attention to the evidence convicts them of methodic fiction, and ourselves of blank ignorance as to what was passing in the world during that century.

Let us pass on to the next page. Here a phenomenon of extraordinary importance arrests attention. It is the uprising, according to the Jewish tradition, of the corporation known as the Synagogue. The early seats of Jewish prosperity and culture are the cities of the land called Sepharad—that is, Cordova, Toledo, and other cities of Spain. The Jews say that late in the twelfth century one of their Rabbins went out from Cordova to Cairo in Egypt, that he served under the Mohammedan rulers, and that after founding a school, he died early in the thirteenth century, and was believed to have laid his bones at Hebron in Syria. They say that there was jealousy of his authority among the Rabbins of Zarephath, or France; but that in the end the people agreed to honour his memory as their greatest Doctor since the ideal foretime. They made pilgrimages to his tomb at Hebron.

Maimonides or Ben Maimun—here an Arabic name—and his history are symbolic of the relation of the Jews to their elder brethren, the Ishmaelites. But Maimonides gave the Jews a Creed; and it was near to Maimonides' time that the Hebrew Scriptures were written, began to be recited in the Synagogues and to be commented upon by the Rabbins. It is the ecclesiastical dogma of the Jews that the Hebrew Scriptures were of immense antiquity; but the facts about their schools in Spain, and in France and Germany, so far as they are known, enable us to distinguish sharply between the ideal and the actual in their retrospect. It is not that they have any exact dates even of Maimonides' birth and death. No registers were kept by any

people, so far as we know, in that dark time. There was no exacter chronology with them than with other nations. The Rabbins who began to write, under the influence of the Revival of Learning,* the story of the people's woe, show how little was accurately known of the past, but some details of persecution. But it may, perhaps, be assumed that they knew they had been united into a corporation owning the memory of their great Doctor at some time during the thirteenth century.

Now, the Benedictine corporation could not have come into existence before the Hebrew Scriptures were in some version known to them, because they base their system of teaching upon a certain interpretation of those Scriptures. They never raise the question of the authority of the Jewish writings. They assume them as axiomatic, and needing no demonstration. We cannot well conceive the Benedictines having any religious employment in England or elsewhere, until they had the Psalter to chant, for example. This was one of their chief occupations. Moreover, they say, in writings the date of which has yet to be ascertained, that the New Testament has been formed on a system of correspondence with the Old. That may not be their exact mode of expression; but it is the only way in which a modern critic can understand the evidence they adducé upon this subject.

Apart from all mysticism and dreams of an imaginary antiquity, the general drift of the evidence is perfectly clear. The Jewish ecclesiastics say that the Christian Church is the child of Judaism—a child which has cruelly ill-used its mother. The oldest Christian family admits, in the New Testament, that the teachers of the Law and of the Mishna were in the

* RR. Joseph ben Mair, A. Zacuto, D. Ganz.

world before their own teachers. So far there is agreement; and if the date of the first Hebrew Bible that was known outside the Synagogue could be ascertained, it would set up a most important landmark. Before that time the Benedictine literature could not have been written; some considerable interval after that time it must have been before the Benedictines could have constructed out of their study of "the Old Testament," as they called the Hebrew Scriptures, another book which they chose to call "the New Testament."

On this ground of Jewish tradition it is not in the least safe, then, to assume that the Order of St. Benedict was formed until some time late in the thirteenth century. It is clear from all its writings, its sentiments, and place in the world, that it was formed as a rival system to that of the Jews at a time when the Jews were very influential and the objects of the most passionate jealousy and envy on the part of the nations of the West. The like feeling is shown against the Moham-medans; but the reason why the more deadly and vindictive attack is made upon the Jews is that the Jews have, from their first appearance as a distinct people, been a European people, and have insisted upon living and thriving in the midst of their persecutors. One of the surest means of dispelling illusions about the people is to keep this fact before us. The Jews have been taught by the tradition which they share with the Arabians, to look dreamily toward Syria as the seat of David's mystic throne. But they have never been numerous or happy in that land within the knowledge of man. They never possessed a territory nor raised an army; yet their destiny was to carry on and complete the conquest of the Arabians over the Western imagination.

To return to the question before us. We shall never arrive at any exact knowledge of what was occurring in Europe during the long ages when the Moslem was master of the Mediterranean. A great number of military Orders of the Cross may have been formed to resist the Moslems and may have passed away without record, preparing the way for the monks. But the monks themselves, as they stand revealed in their dogmas and their malevolent theories about the Orientals, could not have been established, so far as we know, in any part of the world until some time in the thirteenth century. If so, they had ample time in the two long ages that followed, to settle in our pleasant valleys, to acquire that enormous ascendancy over the imagination of our peoples; and thereby that enormous prestige and wealth was never more matter for astonishment and indignation than it is at this distance of time, and under the light of the ever-increasing contrast of our present culture.

The reader will observe that there is no proper consideration of the subject before us until we have given attention to the state of Schools, Libraries, and Books, and also to the general state of intelligence outside the cloisters. The monks themselves, according to the testimony of their own writers, were profoundly ignorant and indisposed to learning at the end of the fifteenth century. Outside, the condition of the nobles and the laity in general was still darkness. It was among secular scholars, who were mostly at the same time clerks, that the stirrings of curiosity began, and that a demand arose for some knowledge of the past, which it was supposed the most ancient Order alone could gratify. That a solitary monk here and there took it into his head to write history, when there was

no class of readers or listeners to appreciate it, is one of those absurdities which, well considered, leads to the detection of the whole system of fiction.

To sum up on this question. The epoch of the rise of the Order or of the Christian Hierarchy in general, cannot be ascertained, unless we can first ascertain the epoch of the Rise of the Synagogue. Now the work of the Jewish Chronologers of the Renaissance show that they had no means of knowing the exact truth respecting their ecclesiastical antiquities. Like the members of the other Corporations, they were obliged to fill the void with lists of names and literary works, arranged in chronological retrospective, which is artistic rather than scientific. It is probable that the mass of Rabbinical writing which was brought to the Italian printing presses during the Revival of Letters had been mainly the work of the preceding hundred years. The Rabbins had considerable knowledge of Latin and Greek ; but Latin and Greek culture, according to the only statements we possess, namely, those of the Humanists of the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, was but faintly beginning at the end of the fifteenth century. So far, then, as the literary evidence is concerned, it seems impossible to ascend beyond the last-named epoch. It must at present be mere matter of conjecture how long any of the Corporations had been in existence before that time. The Society of Jesus and the Church of England are both sixteenth-century institutions ; and it is a thing not well conceivable, in the light of the evidence as a whole, that any Christian Hierarchy had been in existence many ages before them.

Probable
epoch of the
Benedictines.

CHAPTER II.

THE BENEDICTINE ARCHITECTURE.

SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN was, I believe, the first English scholar who seriously studied the Christian architecture and who perceived that it was an imitation of the architecture of the Moham-medans.

Wren on the
Benedictine
architec-
ture, 1668.

His surveys of Salisbury Cathedral and other examples of the so-called "Gothic mode" induced him to make inquiry into its rise and progress.* In spite of the erroneous views of his time in reference to the chronological relation of the two religious systems, Wren saw that our Cathedrals were—to employ his own phrase—of "Saracen architecture refined by the Christians." It was during "the Holy War" that the Christians learned to imitate their sacred buildings, and that the confraternity of Freemasons was formed.

The Freemasons, according to Wren, were composed of Italians, with a few Greek refugees from the East, of French, Germans, and Flemings.

The
Freemasons.

They ranged from nation to nation as they found churches to be built by the piety of the multitude. They had a regular government, and were wont to pitch their camps on hills near to the buildings they had in hand. There was a chief surveyor; and every tenth

* Dodsworth, "History of Salisbury Cathedral."

man was a warden, or overlooker of each nine. The gentry of the neighbourhood, from motives of charity, or to commute a penance, supplied the materials and the means of carriage. The steeple is the pride of Christian architecture, as the cupola is the pride of the Mohammedans. The steeple of Vienna, for example, is contrasted with the "Saracen" dome of St. Mark's, Venice.*

Wren thought the "Gothic mode" to be "an ingenious compound of work, suited to these Northern climates," but tending to fantastic barbarity; being himself an admirer of the pure Roman or classic mode, which, he said, was revived at the same time with the pure Latin of the Augustan age. The classical architecture and the classical literature, then, are parts of one Phænomenon of the human spirit. The so-called "Saracenic" and "Gothic"—in other words, the Moslem and the Monastic—architecture, with the corresponding literature, belong to another class of Phænomena. In our own time Mr. Owen Jones has said that the Alhambra should be compared with the Koran, and the Cathedral with the Bible.

Elias Ashmole, the contemporary of Wren, was a zealous Freemason, and busied himself on the antiquities of the Order, which, however, form but a part of the fabled antiquities of the Order of St. Benedict. The tradition ran in Ashmole's time that "St. Alban, the Proto-Martyr of England," established Masonry here; that in "the Saxon time" King Athelstan granted them a Charter; that in "the Norman time" they enjoyed royal favour, and so on. The whole of this retrospect is based on Benedictine

* See "Biog. Britann.," art. "Wren;" Dodsworth, "History of Salisbury Cathedral."

fable. The initiation to the Order was said to resemble a Benedictine initiation. It was said that a Bull had been granted to the Freemasons in the time of Henry III., in accordance with which they travelled over Europe on their building errands.

It was believed that their inviolable secrecy and mutual fidelity had exposed them to persecution in troublous times. But when we come to the period of the factions of the Roses, we are still devoid of authentic information about the Freemasons. Some supposed that by a statute of Henry VI. the Society was abolished and its meetings proclaimed under severe penalties. Others said that Henry VI. and some of his Court were fellows of the craft. Later, the Freemasons were believed to have been generally Yorkists, and it was said that the sagacious Henry VII. intruded some of his partisans upon them in the guise of friends, but in reality as spies. Such belief is in accord with the general notions about the political state under the first Tudor king; but we have very few authentic particulars of his time.

It is the general impression which alone we can trust. At the end of the "Middle Ages," or at the beginning of our Modern Culture, we find, by the light of sixteenth-century evidence, that all the societies and corporations of artisans had been working more or less under the influence and control of the ruling Abbots of the Order of St. Benedict; and that the exact story of their rise and progress was either unknown, or if known, was deliberately concealed from the world under clouds of fable. To this day it remains unknown when the foundation-stone of Westminster was laid, or when the chapel of St. Benedict was finished. And if the history of the Masons in connection with that "greatest

sanctuary and rendezvous of devotion in the whole island" cannot be traced out, it cannot be traced out, except by conjecture, in any part of Christendom.

The sources, real or pretended, of our knowledge of Westminster are first the Archives in the Muniment Room. They were not brought to light until the sixteenth century. Then there are the Chapter Books, which begin only with the year 1542. Yet there is a blank from 1554-1558, the time of the last Abbot, Feckenham. The "Customs" ascribed to "Abbot Ware" of the thirteenth century cannot be traced higher than the Library of Sir Robert Cotton, who collected a great quantity of spurious material at the time when the first antiquarian interest set in. No Benedictine monastery, it will be shown, ever possessed genuine "thirteenth-century" monuments. The monastery of Westminster, like all the monasteries, derives its sanctity from the belief that it is the place of sepulchre of saints and princes. Yet its Burial Register does not begin till the year 1606. Lastly, and perhaps most important of all, it is not until late in the fifteenth century that the Prior of the monastery, who passes under the name of "Flete," is supposed to sit down to trace its history from the foundation to the year 1386—a chronicle, not only most meagre, but fabulous from first to last, and filled with trifles which are of no service to the modern inquirer.

After all the loving diligence with which Dean Stanley collected the fables concerning the Abbey, it remains impossible to discern the state of the buildings at the accession of Henry VII. Abbot Islip (1500-1532) is said to have seen the completion of the

Howell,
1657.

Ignorance at
West-
minster.
Stanley's
"Memorials."

Chapel which bears that monarch's name; and also to have carried the Western Towers as high as the roof. The close of the Middle Ages is marked here in London, as throughout Christendom, by lavish expenditure on Church architecture; or—in the phrase of Stanley—"the last efflorescence of monastic architecture coincided with its imminent downfall." The monument of building Abbots remains, while their persons are entirely obscure.

Stanley comments on the insignificance and inactivity of the Cœnobites at Westminster down to the time of the dissolution. He points out that the idea of Property and of Jurisdiction occupied all their thoughts, as with the monks on Mount Athos. He alludes to the condition of Monte Cassino in 1868, where learning at that time exacted the sympathy of Europe, and he adds, "Those who have witnessed the last days of Vallombrosa must confess with a sigh, that like the ancient Abbey of Westminster, its inmates had contributed nothing to the general intelligence of Christendom."

The whole question, then, of the rise of Church architecture in the West resolves itself into the question of probability, or of a combination of probabilities. What is the probable age of an art which was reaching its maturity at the beginning of our Modern Culture? How long is it likely that these ambitious buildings had been designed and carried out, for the glorification of the Hierarchy, before they found it necessary to cultivate literature in the interests of their system? There was a time when the sole intellectual occupation of the monks appears to have consisted in the "Perennial Praise," or chanting of the Psalter, and in the "Prayer without ceasing." To the end of the fifteenth century the Bible was known only in form of short lessons, or

detached books. If these points be well considered, instead of being evaded, it will be found difficult to conceive how the Benedictine architecture could have come into being at anything like the early epoch commonly supposed.

The problem must admit in one way or other of some reasonable solution. It will be recalled that one of the earliest, probably the earliest of Church liturgies, bears the name Mozarabic, and is associated with the activity of Cardinal Ximenes, the patron of the scholars who produced the early polyglot Bible in Spain at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Are we to suppose that before the Mozarabic ritual was used, some other ritual more nearly allied to that of the Arabians was once used in the monasteries? There is no direct evidence on the point, and no room therefore to conceive of a Catholic Church which had rites entirely independent of the rites of Judaism, and which was in existence before its clergy began to use the Hebrew Scriptures, and to make a deliberate attack on the whole people of the Jews. I may content myself with the remark that the monastic buildings must be at least much younger than we have supposed them to be; and that the theory of "Saxon," "Norman," and "English" styles is but part of that theory of English history which it is my business to explain in these pages. I may add that there are experts in the study of Architecture in our country who are persuaded that we have nothing so enormously ancient in England or the West as tradition has invited us to believe.* And the reader may be reminded that "ancient" is a very relative term, which bears no exact value when people have no correct measure of past time. They had

I allude especially to Fergusson.

no such measure in the Tudor period; and the legends which then began to be circulated respecting the Palace and the Monastery at Westminster had never been authenticated by genuine Registers of the Abbots and their works.

CHAPTER III.

THE RISE OF THE BENEDICTINE LITERATURE.

ASSUMING, then, that the Order of St. Benedict could not have been founded before some time in Missions in the West. “the thirteenth century,” we may also assume that the following age saw the beginning of the great missionary enterprise in Sicily, in France, Spain, England, and Germany. They acquired land, they built monasteries and churches, they styled themselves Domini, or Lords, and they helped to set up the Papal monarchy, the earliest seat of which appears to have been the strong fortress-monastery on Monte Cassino. It was from the first their policy to court the favour of the nobles or great men of every land, and to acquire ascendancy over their minds, and to render them the subservient instruments of this new monarchy. This union of temporal with spiritual power was an imitation of the Mohammedans. The Pope was the grand caliph of the Nazaræans; nor shall we widely err if we find, through the medium of allegorical romance, his original in some proud Abbot of Abbots on Monte Cassino.

The track of the Benedictines in different directions is marked by the names of their ideal saints, and later by those of their illustrious literary men, a Cassiodore in Calabria, a St. Placid in Sicily, an Isidore of Seville, a St. Maur, a Gregory of Tours, an Augustine, a Bede of

Wearmouth, and the like. They had this advantage whenever they began writing what was called History, that they could place their productions under the sanction of memorable names previously known and honoured in popular local worship. The question before us is not understood until it is observed that the ideal always preceded the real in every part of their methodical efforts. They dreamed of Illustrious Doctors in distant ages, and advertised their names before they sat down to write works under those names; a process which is clearly revealed to every careful student of their literary catalogues.

Our object is now to ascertain, if possible, the beginnings of the Benedictine Schools. In order that this question may be understood, I will ask the reader to quit for a moment his standpoint in the Dark Ages, and to come down to the time of the reformed Benedictines of St. Maur, among whom shine the scholars, Fathers Mabillon, Montfaucon, D'Achery, and some others. It was not until their time—about 200 years ago—a time rich in scholars of unusual ability, that the mass of Benedictine literature became fully known and was exposed to critical inquiry. Critical inquiry did begin, was unhappily soon stifled, yet not without some very remarkable results.

The Jesuits had, it seems, from their first appearance in the world, looked upon the Benedictines with a certain suspicion and jealousy. The Jesuits were devoted adherents to the Papal monarchy, the stern antagonists of Lollards, Lutherans, and other Protestant heretics. These heretics appealed to the New Testament and to the writings of the "Fathers and Doctors," in other words, to writings which had been produced in

the Benedictine cloisters and other religious houses affiliated to them. Luther himself was an Austin friar, and had once been known as Brother Augustine. The seeds of heresy had been sown by the monks, the friars, and the canons themselves. The Council of Trent, however, the first Council of which we have any authentic information, did not see its way to supersede the writings of the "Fathers." It was reserved for the Jesuits of the following century to throw doubt upon the pretended ancient documents of the Benedictines.

The genuineness of their Charters was strongly questioned by Father Germon and others, who could readily justify their suspicions by reference to the works of Mabillon and Montfaucon. Replies were offered; the question was felt to be delicate, and the pursuit of it was discouraged by the superiors of the Society of Jesus. One scholar of that Society, however—perhaps the greatest they have ever produced—persisted. And his exposure of monkish fraud is the most remarkable event that has occurred in ecclesiastical literary annals. I am referring to Father Hardouin.

Hardouin's life was spent in the pursuits of the
 Father Library. He was of mature age, when in
 Hardouin. 1690, as he tells us, and in the month of
 August, he began to suspect a fraud in the writings
 ascribed to Augustine and his contemporaries. In
 November his suspicions had extended to all the
 "Fathers;" in May, 1692, he detected the whole system.
 He had made long extracts from the Greek and Latin
 "Fathers," Cyril, Theodoret, Augustine, Jerome, etc.;
 had convinced himself that these writings were part of
 a system of literature, devised and carried out by the
 monks and friars from some time, as he believed, in the
 fourteenth century. Hardouin insisted that it must be

a Jesuit who should detect these frauds, because there was no other Catholic family which had not been imposed upon by spurious writings under the names of distinguished men.

The Dominicans, he said, had "Thomas Aquinas," "Vincent of Beauvais," and others; the Franciscans had "Bonaventura," "Scotus;" the Carmelites, "Thomas Walden;" and so with other Orders. But the Benedictines, he adds, possessed "a whole legion" of spurious writers. Hardouin mingled theological and polemical matter with his literary criticisms in a manner displeasing, perhaps, to the more secular student. But the points which he made against the old Benedictine writings have never been answered, and are indeed incapable of being answered. Having pursued a different path of inquiry from his, I am able to say that I can confirm him by having arrived at similar general conclusions.

It was not until 1754 that two Benedictine scholars published a History of their Literature, in which are to be found some extremely interesting references to Father Hardouin. Let me bring a remarkable library scene before the reader's imagination. It seems that in the year 1711, Angelo Maria Quirinus, an esteemed Benedictine scholar, later a Cardinal, called on Hardouin in Paris. They conversed together on the questions raised by the well-known opinions of the latter. Hardouin stoutly maintained that Christianity had no authentic documents save the Vulgate Bible, the decrees of the Council of Trent, and a few coins. The two scholars paced to and fro through the library; the Benedictine was no match for the Jesuit, and in order to give a pleasant turn to the conversation, he seized upon a dummy volume with a fictitious title which

Dom
Ziegelbauer,
"Literary
History of
the Bene-
dictines."

stood on one of the shelves, and triumphantly exclaimed that here was a fraud which had *not* been contrived in the libraries of the monks!

The weakness of Hardouin's position as a scholar obviously consisted in maintaining the antiquity of the Vulgate, at the same time that he denied the antiquity of the writings of the men through which alone the Vulgate is known to us. But Hardouin was a priest; he must beg the question at some point; and it appears from other parts of his writing that, had he been driven from the defence of the Vulgate, he would have taken refuge in a purely mystical position, and would have insisted that in the Sacrament of the Altar the pious Catholic had an immediate revelation of God. He was well aware of the danger of making any appeal to history before the time of the Council of Trent.

A digression in these matters often saves the student long travel. Hardouin was certainly in the right when he declared that the age in which he lived was the first truly critical age in the course of Church history. It was the age of Richard Simon, of Le Clerc, of Lowth, and many other admirable scholars. Lowth (1661-1732) paid an honourable testimony to the great genius of Hardouin, while he blamed what he thought his self-confidence, his arrogance, and his rashness. Whenever a new race of truly critical scholars appears, the debt which the study owes to Hardouin will at length be acknowledged. At the same time it will be seen that his was the most daring attempt to reconcile the conscience of the priest with the conscience of the historian of which we have any record; and that few can hope to succeed where he has failed.

To resume. It was not until 200 years after the establishment of the Press that the Benedictine literature

was challenged at the bar of critical opinion. Its claim to genuineness and antiquity was then decisively refuted—in one sense too early, in another sense too late. We shall now be the better prepared to understand how it was that the monks were enabled to make that claim and to get their claim allowed, at a time when there was a rage for false antiquity, and when no scholar had any thorough knowledge of the critical business.

In this connection it may be useful to remind the reader of the labours of some of our English ^{English} scholars of the late seventeenth century on the ^{critics.} Benedictine literature. From the time of Queen Elizabeth and King James the collection of MSS. had been going on under the hands of Cotton, Spelman, Selden, and others, without any exact critical inquiry into their work, and without much careful sifting of their contents. Sir William Dugdale, who belonged to the same industrious tribe, published in 1655 the first volume of his great work, "Monasticon Anglicanum," a repertory of the documents of the Benedictines and connected Orders. The remaining volumes appeared in 1661 and 1673. They contain a large number of forged Foundation Charters in the interests of the Order. The Donation Charters were too numerous to be published.

These volumes escaped serious criticism. Thomas Fuller was dead, and there was none upon whom his mantle had fallen. Nevertheless, his Church History of Britain remains, a monument of the piercing wit and sagacity of the author, to whose extraordinary abilities justice has been done by Coleridge. Fuller showed that our early Church History was romance, and went far toward destroying all confidence in the monastic writers. In denying that the Church in Britain had

been founded by the Apostles, he in effect denied the Dogma on which all the history of the West reposes. But after his death, the dullards of whom he was the dismay, resumed their reign in the world of letters. The collectors and conservators of fables had always been in an overwhelming majority; and thus the mass of monastic matter which came to light during the latter part of the seventeenth century has been used again and again, with little protest, by our writers on English history. Mendacity, in the opinion of many, appears to be consecrated by time.

Mention should also be made of the work of Dean Dean
Hickes. George Hickes on the "Northern Languages," published early in the last century, wherein he makes some very damaging remarks at the expense of Dom Mabillon's noted work, "De Re Diplomaticâ," already the object of the criticisms of the Jesuit scholars. The modern scholar cannot review this controversy without perceiving that had there been any sufficient number of independent men of letters interested in the subject, they would never have allowed these present sciences of "Diplomatic" and "Palæography" to be imposed upon the ignorance of the world.

CHAPTER IV.

FABLES OF THE BENEDICTINE SCHOOLS.

IF the reader will construct for himself a map showing the centre of Christian, that is, of monastic, activity during the Revival of Letters, he will understand better than from mere verbal description how mighty was at that time the temporal empire of Christ, and how entirely it was an empire of the West. The plains and vales of Italy, of France, of Spain, of Germany, and Austria are dotted with the Benedictine monasteries, and magnificent churches are rising on every hand. The literary centres were, however, few, and very scantily supplied with books, according to modern notions, during the whole of the first half of the sixteenth century. It depended mainly on the instincts of the particular Abbot whether literature should be cultivated in compliance with the pressure of the age, or whether attention should be almost wholly devoted to the routine of the services, and the extension of the temporality and jurisdiction of the abbey.

It should be remembered, however, that the productions of any of the more learned cloisters were joint-stock property of the Order; and that it signifies little where a learned monk wrote, and on what subject he wrote, since every work was a part of the system of theology and of the New Law which it was the business

of the Order to promulgate to the world. It is not necessary, therefore, to make the complete tour of the learned monasteries; but merely to show that in those which the Benedictines say were the oldest and the most flourishing, Culture, and in particular the writing of Story, was in its infancy at the time of the introduction of Typography.

They say that the oldest school is that on Monte Cassino, which was, during the period in question, the seat of the Abbot of Abbots, and the headquarters of the whole spiritual Army. The probability is that the whole system of their literature was devised in that cloister, in co-operation with the Greek monks of Grotta Ferrata, which was under the control of Monte Cassino, and which stood also in close sentimental connection with the cradle cloister of Subiaco—the first foundation ascribed to St. Benet, where the first Italian printing-press is said to have been erected.

What, then, do they say was doing at Monte Cassino during “the thirteenth century”? It is needless to detain the reader with “the twelfth century,”

because if Thomas Aquinas cannot be ascertained, it will be impossible to ascend to any higher point and plant our feet on historic ground. The tale, told in the usual flowery style of the Benedictines, runs that Thomas of Aquino, a town at the distance of a few miles from the great Cloister—that Thomas of Aquino, “a star of the first magnitude,” illuminated Monte Cassino by his presence in the thirteenth century. At the early age of five years he became a monk, about the year 1230. In this tale both the Benedictines and the Dominicans are agreed; and the particulars may be studied in the History of

the cloister by Dom Gattola of the former Order,* Abbot of Monte Cassino.

He admits that the truth of the tale has been disputed ; and, in fact, to an external critic no particle of satisfying evidence can be offered that a known person named Thomas of Aquino ever entered the cloister. The question of the ideal and the real in personality is constantly raised in the course of these studies. The finest characters in history are always the purely ideal ; next come the idealized characters. And few are the conspicuous characters that have not been strongly idealized. But Thomas Aquinas, like all the Saints of the mediæval time, takes his place in the highest rank. He belongs to the category of the pure ideal. He is the product of Church hue and Church fantasy. Moreover, the source of his ideal is to be discovered in the Latin Bible itself.

In Ecclesiasticus we read, "In the midst of the Church the Lord opened his mouth and filled him with the spirit of wisdom and understanding. He clothed him with the robe of glory." So we read on March 7th, the feast of St. Thomas, in the Service Book. The subject is not understood until you perceive that the congregation of Aquino raised the ideal of their patron before literature began to be written under his name.

The Ideal
of St.
Thomas
Aquinas.

He is said to have been the son of the Count of Aquino by a noble lady of Teatine family ; and a pleasing view is given in the history of the convent by the late Abbate Tosti, of the scene in which the boy is led by his parents to the door, where the Abbot awaits his coming. The scene is one of the allegories of the alliance of monks and nobles. We are in the

* "Hist. Cassin.," sec. viii. v. 478.

atmosphere of Church romance; nor do we pass out of it when we turn to Dante's page, enter Paradise with him, and listen to the melodious accents of the Angelic Doctor. The Villani Chronicle—the date of whose composition has never been ascertained—tells how Thomas was poisoned at the instigation of Charles of Anjou. There is an allusion to this in the "Divine Comedy."

It is necessary to examine every literary document of importance, if we would distinguish poetry from fact. The ideal of St. Thomas is to be found in the "Divine Comedy." But it is to be observed that the poet does not connect him with Monte Cassino. How is this to be explained? It is remarkable that Monte Cassino, so interested as she must have been from the first in the contents of this poem, does not know the date of her MS. copy of the work. The Abbot, Dom Tosti, in discussing the question, tells us that—apart from the tales in the Chronicles of "Leo Marsicanus"—the earliest known catalogue of the books in the monastery is of the time of Paul II., c. 1464–1471. The next dates from the time of Clement VII., 1523–1534. These are statements of the utmost importance. I have no hesitation in pointing to the period 1464–1534 as, roundly speaking, the first great period of Italian Benedictine literature. Whatever had been produced before that time was most slight in point of quantity and of no importance to the historical student.

Montfaucon, the great Benedictine Palæographer, preserved a silence on the subject of the "Divine Comedy" which Father Tosti admits to be inexplicable, had the existence of the MS. been known to him. It appeared at last in the voluminous Catalogue of Federici.

Under this failure of external evidence, Tosti was reduced to infer the age of the MS. from comparison of handwritings. He assigns it on that ^{Age of the MS.} ground to the period 1326-1378.* If, however, no scholar who attends to the subject of Church chronology can venture to assume that he proves anything about fourteenth-century handwriting, the opinion falls for want of support. Nor is it for a moment to be supposed that a poem like the "Divine Comedy," which bears strong internal evidence in parts of having been written by a clerk imbued with that widespread anti-papal feeling which led to the Reformation, should, if written in the fourteenth century, have remained unknown at Monte Cassino until so late an epoch. What we are to think of the legend of Dante depends on the exacting critical examination of the Villani Chronicle. Here, again, Hardouin has anticipated the works of some recent scholars. The doubts which beset the Villani Chronicle are those which beset the whole system of the Chronicles of the West. My object in this place is to point out that the rise of the ideal of St. Thomas of Aquino is part of one question with the rise of the ideal of the "holy blissful martyr" of Canterbury, and many other analogous forms. I must anticipate, and say that the origin of these ideals was in the pious imagination of the monks and friars; and that their written legends cannot be traced higher than the latter half of the fifteenth century.†

I take up the thread of the argument at the point of Dom Tosti's statement in respect to a Library ^{State of Libraries.} at Monte Cassino. If you make an induction of the evidence, you will find that the legends of earlier

* See Tosti and Mai, "Specil. Rom.," v. 221; and "Script. Vet.," iii. 2, 183.

† Cf. Thomas Stapleton, the translator of Bede—"On the Three Thomases," 1588.

libraries melt away before the admitted fact of the late origin of the Libraries in Monte Cassino, in Rome under Nicolas V., in Venice under Cardinal Bessarion, at Spanheim under Abbot Trithemius, at Paris, Canterbury or Oxford under various names. At Oxford the legend of Duke Humphrey's Library survives. This was late in the fifteenth century. It is said to have consisted of a mere 129 books, which is probably near to the truth. Nor can we for a moment think of any collection of books worthy the name of an English Library in modern acceptation until the time of Sir Thomas Bodley. Thomas Aquinas could not have been honoured as an Illustrious Doctor until library culture was far advanced and the teachers called *Summists* began to be busy in the schools of the West.

It is the same case with the lists of illustrious scholars in Monte Cassino and the other cloisters. These lists had to be made out in obedience to the theory of early Church culture, but they prove on examination to be equally fragile with the lists of books. It is the theory of Church studies, which were quite in their infancy during the period of forming libraries, which is illustrated in these Catalogues of the past Illustrious. We come upon the remarkable fact that, although the monks pretend they have had important scholars like "Dionysius Exiguus," Abbot of Rome, as they call him, in the sixth century from the time of the old Empire—at the brilliant epoch of the Renaissance they can produce none, or next to none at all, who flourished in the fifteenth century.

Thus the Monte Cassino tradition names in that age none but the very learned monk Pyrrhus, Referendary of Martin V., and Conservator of the rights of the church of St. Justina, under

Lists of
scholars.

Seeming
inactivity
until the
Revival.

Eugenius IV. There are, says Dom Gattola, a number of MS. sermons and expositions referable to this period, but it is not known whether they were written by monks of the cloister. How is this strange seeming silence and somnolence at Monte Cassino amidst all the excitement of reviving intellectual activity to be accounted for? I have stood long in imagination on Monte Cassino, pondering these things. I have made many excursions to the daughter cloisters of the West. I have made a careful use of the historic telescope. And I may save the student some profitless fatigue of research if I announce at once the explanation which appears to me the only correct one of this curious phenomenon. The scheme of Benedictine literature was laid down and began to be executed close upon the time when a collection of books is known to have existed in the cloister. Our *terminus a quo* is the rough date of the Printing Press (for it cannot be exactly discovered), or the Pontificate of Paul II., and our *terminus ad quem* is about the year 1524, when the noise of the great Innovation and the attack upon the papal monarchy had filled the world. The doings at Monte Cassino and the other cloisters are wrapped in darkness during the late fifteenth century. In the next age intense curiosity is felt among the inquiring monks and friars to read the book which is a novelty in the world—I mean, the Bible.

When once by effort of steady attention to the admitted facts you have pierced the cloud of fable that has gathered about the height of Monte Cassino, you will descry a Scriptorium there for the first time in the late fifteenth century; and you will observe a knot of the Black Monks busy in writing works which are to be issued to the world by-and-by with the names of

Paul the Deacon,* Peter the Deacon, Paul the Monk, and many others, including St. Peter Damiani. The ecclesiastical names of Peter and Paul are beloved in Monte Cassino ; they took their rise on that spot.

It is in consistence with the opinion just indicated respecting the late origin of literature on Monte Cassino that there should have suddenly occurred in the sixteenth century a great outburst of learning and eloquence in that Cœnobium. Poets, Orators, Historians, Philosophers, Theologians, Canonists, Polyglottists spring up as if at some magic touch. Among them is distinguished the name of an Englishman, Gregory Sayre, who alone (the Benedictines say) would have been a great ornament to the sacred mount. Abbot Angelo de Nuce gives a list of other Englishmen of good family, learning and virtue, who found a home during this age in the cloister.

In short, it was not until the sixteenth century that the Benedictines were fully aroused from the long intellectual indolence they had indulged. The use of typography ; the discovery of a new world ; the disturbance among the Orders in England, France, and Germany ; the uprising of the Jesuits on the one hand, on the other of the Lutherans ;—all stimulated the followers of the Patriarch of Monachism to make good in literature the position they had won and held so long by the sword. Men looked to the monasteries, knowing that there, if anywhere, must lie the best keys to knowledge. The Benedictines seized the opportunity. They had no registers, no genuine records of a long past. They had little more than the bare Dogma of the Incarnation out of which to construct a theory of history, to be

* This name is the link with England. He is said first to write of "Anglo-Saxons."

converted into historic forms by the aid of Jewish, Arabic and classical literature.

They did not altogether escape censure, as the memory of Laurence Valla and of Poggio teaches. There are floating sayings reported from Rome at the epoch under consideration which hint of a state of mind on the part of the more educated men of scoffing incredulity towards monkish history. They are not easily forgotten. A monkish biographer of Paul II. reports that there was some club or guild of young men in Rome who regarded the orthodox faith as "*resting on certain tricks of saints, rather than on true testimony.*" And who can dispossess his memory of the saying put into the mouth of the genial and secular-minded Pope Leo X.—"*How profitable to us that fable of Jesus Christ!*" To organize men in the service of interested Fable is easy; and the systematic industry of the Benedictines, directed by the coolest of intellects, gained the day over the exposures and the protests of struggling scholars who had a genuine taste for antiquity and for truth. That saintly manner of the leading Benedictines which some scholars knew to be the disguise of hypocrisy and fraud has imposed upon a multitude of others as if it were a guarantee of veracity. They were not aware, or they were unwilling to own, that the union of orthodoxy with daring fiction was from the first inseparable.

CHAPTER V.

THE SCHEME OF BENEDICTINE LITERATURE.

THE reader who is conversant with the Latin tongue may form for himself a very clear idea of the Scheme of the Literature of the Order, executed under the direction of the ablest Prelates during a period I am endeavouring to determine, by consulting the History of that Literature published in 1754 by Dom Ziegelbauer and Dom Legipont. But, for the sake of readers who do not find ready access to the work, or who are acquainted only with English, I will here extract from those volumes a general view of the subject-matter.

Theology is, of course, as with all the ecclesiastical organizations, the governing principle of the structure. And Theology is divided into Positive, Scholastic, Dogmatic-Polemic, Moral, Mystic, and Ascetic.

Positive Theology consists of two parts: the explanation of the Scriptures, and the knowledge of the dogmas of the faith. Both are derived from the reading of the "Fathers," the Councils, and the Traditions.

The great Law-giver, St. Benet, constantly cites Scripture in his Rule, thus showing his appreciation of it. Generally he cites the Vulgate, but sometimes the "Seventy." It is further said that St. Benet follows the example of the Saviour in

blending two half-verses of a Psalm into one citation. Father Haeften, a member of the Order, has also pointed out that St. Benet in certain places does not follow the Gospel in his allusions to persons of the Gospel time. For example, the Publican is supposed to say, "Lord, I am not worthy, sinner that I am, to lift my eyes to Heaven." The explanation given is that St. Benet *infers* these words from what St. Luke relates. But the true explanation is that the Rule and the Gospels were the production of the same Order; and the Rule may have been composed at a time when the text of the Gospels was not yet fixed. So lax, indeed, were the habits of the writers, yet so fluid the tradition, St. Benet means by Scripture not merely the sacred writings, but anything written by saint or celebrated author. Again, the true explanation is that the Benedictine Literature was constructed upon the system of sentences. A series of "Says he," or "It is written" were gradually made the property of named, yet ideal persons.

Thus Flowers of Speech, supposed to be taken from the Holy Fathers, adorn the chapters of the Rule. But then the modern Benedictines say that it is hard to make out how much of the "Fathers" the Legislator knew. This may be understood to mean that the process of constructing those writings had not long been begun when the Rule was edited. When "St. Basil the Great" or "St. Clement of Rome" is named as a great theologian, whose influence is owned in the Rule, it is that the same wares seem enhanced in value by being placed under various high-sounding names. St. Benet is not made to name St. Clement of Rome, although the modern Benedictines have seen that the fourth chapter of the Rule is substantially the same

with Clementine writings. The reason, they say, is that the false "Isidore the Merchant" took the chapter from St. Benet and set it down to Clement. It was Mabillon* who exposed this trick of literary subornation; but it was not for Mabillon to say that the names and dates attached to the old literature were worthless as evidence of anything, so long as the deeds of forgers and suborners had not been fully ascertained and exposed.

It is the fact of anonymous collaboration in the Scriptoria which explains the doubt about the works of "St. Augustine," whether they had been read by St. Benet or not. It is clearly seen that phrases and sentences in the Rule are identical with those in works ascribed to "St. Augustine;" † a passage on the bodily death of Ananias and Sapphira may be found in the two documents, which shows a common origin. Father Haeften would have it that the Legislator had also deflowered that fragrant Garden, "The Epistles of St. Jerome," of some of its sweets. But he owns not the debt. Impossible not to smile at these conjectures. The good monks of a modern critical time are so infatuated with their idol or ideal, the Protoparent or Paterfamilias of the Order, they *must* assume his personality behind the Rule, and invent explanations of these curious phenomena in accord with that theory. But the plain literary fact is that the saints who precede and those who follow the Legislator are mere conveniences of romantic necessity, and were born into the literary world about the same time.

There can be left no doubt upon the mind of any clear-sighted reader, from the confessions of the

* Ann., lect. 1, 142.

† "Rule of St. Benedict," cap. 60, Augustin Ser. 148.

Benedictines themselves, that the Christian Scriptures, from which they deduce all their system, had been by them first deduced from the Scriptures of the Synagogue. It is they alone who have the key to the New Testament parables or allegories. By him "who brings out of his treasury things new and old" is meant each Abbot of the Order who is skilled in the Divine Law. They were, indeed, partly imitators, partly inventors in literature; while the mass of their monastic children were nothing but parrot-like reciters of what they had been taught to commit to memory; which was little more than the Psalms, in the singing of which their "mind was to agree with their voice." They must understand something of the meaning of the words.

After St. Benedict, "Cassiodore" of the Calabrian cloister at Vivaria is made to declaim vaguely on Divine learning. His companion was "Dionysius the Small" (Exiguus), a great Scriptural scholar, the first Christian chronologer who began dating the years from the Incarnation. At Rome, during the same age, we are introduced to "St. Gregory the Great," who had made great progress in Theology under an ex-monk of Monte Cassino, the archmonastery of the Order, and who took particular interest in the writings of "St. Augustine." All the Gregorian literature and romance is again a part of the product of what I have called the Benedictine Round Table of the Revival of Letters. The Gregorian system of Biblical interpretation, with all its artifice and false science, shows how impossible it was for the monk to admit the common people to the unaided perusal of the Scriptures. We in England are supposed to have great veneration for this our apostle and distinguished allegorist. He is made to

admit that he understands neither Hebrew nor Greek ; he is content with the Italic and the "new version of Jerome." In other words, the Gregorian style is late fifteenth or early sixteenth century ; the time when our ancestors began to hear of this Pontiff who had sent Augustine and other Benedictines to those shores, and a variety of other novel "histories."

It is certainly a pleasant thing to be taught Theology under the forms of Biography. The procession of Benedictine theologians seems to march across the mental stage, each carrying his portly tomes under his arm. But when you request permission to examine these tomes, and discover that the contents are all of one substance, and that not one of these scholars has dared to speak a new or spontaneous word, that they are all essentially in one tale, the illusion vanishes. The great system dwindles into small bulk ; and you cannot but suspect an amused smile upon the faces of the men who knew with how little wit the world is deceived, and how a few simple devices might succeed in producing the impression that the secret theological toil of a few decades had been going on for many ages. Bede, first heard of as an ancient monk of Wearmouth in the early Tudor time, and exalted to Venerability during the same period, duly succeeds in the illustrious Roll, in turn duly pointing to Greek and Latin scholars in the South and North who had preceded him. You will find in "Bede" the historical, mystical, and moral theology of the Benedictines once more repeated.

Then "St. Boniface" and his coterie of imaginary Benedictines of a monastery near Oxford make their appearance—all luminous Biblical men in dark ages when the Bible had never been heard of. Then there

is the Northumbrian professor Iglac, after whose death letters are again "forgotten," as the imaginary "Council of Cloveshoe" deploras "in the year 747." Then there is a Revival under "Alcuin," another imaginary Benedictine, and his disciple, the Abbot of Fulda, who is disguised under the curious appellation of "Rabanus Maurus." The monks of the connected cloisters of St. Gall, of Luxeuil, of Ferrières, Auxerre, Rheims, Orbais, Weissenburg, and other places, all set up their corresponding ideals. The monastery of Corbey claims the noted names of "Paschasius Radbertus," and others. All of them drink of the same fountain, the writings of the four great Benedictine Doctors, "SS. Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, Gregory," besides "John of the Golden Mouth," and the "Venerable Bede," also "Tertullian." Corbey sends out a swarm to found New Corbey in Saxony, which was conscious of all the divisions of opinion brought to light at the Great Schism.

The School of Bec can boast of her proud creations in "Lanfranc," "St. Anselm," and through these of a shoal of fresh theologians in an impossible age. We come in the twelfth century to "St. Peter Damiani," who, the Benedictines themselves admit, could hardly have had the University rank assigned to him in an age when Universities could hardly be said to exist. There are the Odos of Cluny and Canterbury, there is Ralph of Westminster; there is the romantic story of Peter Abelard and his female disciple—an imitation of that of Jerome and Paula and Eustochium. And so we slowly descend the centuries, without marking any progress in literary culture. When we arrive at last at the epoch of the celebrated Trithemius, Abbot of Spanheim, as it is said, during the important period

1480-1520, we find him in bitter conflict with his slothful monks, who are not to be induced to study the Scriptures nor any other books. The Abbot is in the habit of calling his monks "frogs." They in turn reviled their learned Father. "We want an abbot who will plough the fields, not one who trades in words"—an *arator*, not an *orator*. Richard of Kidderminster, Abbot of Winchcombe, is said (on Antony Wood's authority) to have been a great champion against Luther. But the monks were forbidden to read the Lutheran books; and the study of Theology must have been very limited among them until after the Council of Trent. At last in the next age we come to the name of a scholar of wide reputation, the Abbot Calmet (1672-1757), one of whose controversial opponents was a man who laid the cause of Letters under great debt—Father Richard Simon, the Oratorian, 1638-1712.

It is not necessary to pursue in a similar manner the biographical story of the other branches of Theology through the same series of ages. The same names, with others of the like origin in the idealizing propensities of the literary faction in the monasteries of the West, recur; and the result is still the same, that in the age immediately following the invention of printing, these various branches of Theology are only beginning to be known and studied, either in the cloisters where they had been composed, or in the outside world.

The next branch of Benedictine learning is Ecclesiastical Jurisprudence, civil and public, especially of the Roman-German Empire. Omitting the repetition of many imaginary names already given, the notorious *Decretum* ascribed to

“Gratian” has been sufficiently exposed by writers of our own time: a violent effort to secure privilege and predominance for the Clergy by means of a series of historic inventions under feigned names, analogous to other parts of the system. No professor of this branch of learning can be authentically ascertained in England during the fifteenth century; but to Feckenham, last Abbot of Westminster, is ascribed a tract against the Oath of Supremacy of the King of England in spiritual causes.

Again, with reference to the study of Civil Law, the Benedictines produce their St. Aldhelm of Sherborne, then “Capitularies of the French Kings,” then “Laws of the Sainted King Edward” of England, confirmed by “William the Conqueror:” a tale that comes from the noted forge of Croyland Abbey. Theirs also is the tale of Roger Vacarius, Abbot of Bec, and his teaching of Roman Law in England during the “twelfth century,” whereas there is no evidence outside the monasteries of any systematic study of Law until the sixteenth century, whether within or without the cloisters.

It is, I believe, one of the examples of a cynical, half-jesting temper which may again and again be detected in the contrivance of these stories, that when the monks are asked, Who was the first Jurisperite among you? the bland answer is given, “It was one *Speciosus*, who was sent by the Holy Father Benedict to Terracina and had the care of the temporalities.” The authority is the famous Gregorian “Dialogues;” and the initiated may admire the speciousness of the tale.

The Benedictines had no genuine philosophy, but the dialectical sophistry which they dignify by that name is as before, arranged under the names Philosophy.

of their imaginary illustrious men, from "Cassiodore" downwards. The "logic of St. Augustine" is theirs; and they make King Alfred appoint a Benedictine first professor of Philosophy at Oxford. It is doubtless true that the Aristotelian philosophy has through their means struck deep roots into the schools of Europe. Reaction against it was reaction against Benedictine Rule.

In Moral Philosophy the most holy Father St. Benedict was instructed from above. He is primate in this science. "They say that Socrates was the first to call down Ethics from Heaven; but how much more truly might this be affirmed of ST. BENEDICT, whose Sacred Rule was written under the afflatus of the Holy Spirit, as the Sacred Councils attest! Who would for a moment compare the Greek philosopher's writing with that inspired Rule?"* Ethics, then, is the peculiar boast of the Benedictines. Gregory the Great is "the Christian Seneca;" Peter the Venerable of Cluny is distinguished in this department, with Peter Abelard and Peter of Poitiers.

The motto of their philosophy is, "*Come unto me, and I will give you rest.*" The Sermon on the Mount is their composition. The blessing on the Poor in Spirit is the blessing on the life of the cloister. The way to true beatitude is here laid open, for the God Man sits in the *cathedra* of Truth. It is Benedictines who say that all other philosophy is wisdom of this world and folly with God. They insist on putting into the mouth of Incarnate God the emphatic commendation of poverty of spirit which is intended at the same time as a denunciation of that natural joy and pride which the mind feels in the acquisition of knowledge. They insist on making their Apostle Paul exhort men to be

* Ziegelbauer, "Hist. Litt.," ii. 292.

fools that they may be wise. Away with the gabble of Logic, the curious pursuits of Physics; boast of nothing except Christ Jesus, and Him crucified! Similar things will be found in the writings of the oft-mentioned Abbot Trithemius of Spanheim; a perfect "king" in moral philosophy. It signifies naught whether the Apostle Paul be supposed to speak, or the spiritual head of a German monastery who represented Christ and the Apostles in his own person. There is little to be said, and it is said over and over again. The Philosophy of the Christians is the only Wisdom, Truth, Highest Good. It consists in knowing the will of your superiors and in being submissive to it. If it is called the "Knowledge of Jesus Christ," this is but a well-understood figure for knowledge derivable only from the Abbatial source.

According to their principles, the Canonical saying, "I was sick, and ye visited Me," is made the precedent for all acts of healing; and in the ^{Medicine.} Rule of St. Benet it is taught in the same way that service to the sick is in reality and truth service to Christ. The language is very emphatic. Then, once more, the illustrious men of the Order from "Cassiodore" are cited to the same effect; Bede is adduced as having some knowledge of phlebotomy, and Archbishop Theodore was of opinion that the fourth day of the moon is dangerous for bleeding, because the light and the rheum of the ocean are on the increase. New Corbey and St. Gall are said to have been noted for their medical men. The monks of Monte Cassino claim some part in the medical school of Salerno. The date of its foundation is not known; but it is clear from the legends of the monks themselves that the Medical Art was introduced by the Mohammedans into Italy and

the West. At some time the monks were forbidden to practice outside the cloisters; there is no reason to suppose that there was much medical knowledge within them at the time of the Renaissance; although it is asserted that Paracelsus was indebted to the writings of that omniscient scholar, Trithemius. An example of the formulæ by which diseases were supposed to be cured is given: "In the blood of Adam death arose, in the blood of Christ death was extinguished. In the same blood of Christ, I command thee, O blood, to restrain thy flow." These were to be written on parchment and suspended on the body.

The Benedictines delighted in the pseudo-science of Natural Magic. It is they who have told the romantic tales about Gerbert or Sylvester II., and who make the great Trithemius a practitioner of this art, of which the Three Magi from the East are prototypical in the Gospel. Alchemy, however, being exploded with the diffusion of sound knowledge, it was discovered that the true way to obtain money when it was needed, was by manual labour or by prayer, according to the recommendation of St. Benet.

The monastic Trivium consisted of Grammar, Rhetoric, and Logic; the Quadrivium of Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, and Music. Astronomy was necessary for the Ecclesiastical Compute and Calendar; and it is one of the proofs of the late origin of the Benedictine system of education that nowhere in Europe was the study of astronomy beginning outside the monasteries until the late fifteenth century; while the increasing troubles about the observance of Easter which led to the reformation of the Calendar in the sixteenth century show how recent it was in cultivation by the

Chemistry
and Secret
Philosophy.

Mathematics.

Order. In truth, no study seems to have been less congenial to the true monk, who must have known, as he was initiated into the science, that from this quarter a fatal blow was to be dealt at his whole system.

There is some effort to trace the rise of Church Music to St. Benet himself, who, with his twin-sister Scholastica, sang in his mother's womb. Music.

The association of Gregory the Great with the art is also conventional; and the Benedictines boast of excelling in this art, so congenial to a system resting more upon emotion than intelligence, all the other Christian families.

We come now to the subject of the greatest importance, History; the nature of which, in the History,
sacred. conception of the Benedictines, has been so long misunderstood. Sacred or Ecclesiastical History consists of Hagiography, or Lives of the Saints, in which "Gregory the Great" is said to have led the way. The products of this branch of Benedictine art should be compared with early Church painting, that their quality may be understood. The portraits are not drawn from the life, but from certain apostolic ideals of character to be found in all their writings.

The Lives of the Roman Pontiffs is another branch of the art. The fable of their beginning Lives of the
Popes. with Anastasius in the "ninth century" has long been exploded; nor is there the slightest reason to suppose that they were put in execution until that peculiarly obscure time at Monte Cassino, the late fifteenth century, which precedes the outbreak of admitted literary effort in the arch-monastery. This is not the place to examine the principles of those Lives, which have been written as examples to be admired or to be shunned. Supposing them to have been conceived

about the time of the great Schism, a careful analysis might show that in them are to be found in allegorical form reflections of the actual state of things at the Papal Court which led to widespread revolt.

Another part of the system, laboured upon similar principles, was the Lives of the Bishops. An example is the "Life of St. Dionysius the Areopagite," written by a monk of his cloister in Paris, and assigned to "Hilduin" of "the ninth century." There can be no question that St. Dionysius of the Acts of the Apostles and St. Denis of Paris were originally one and the same mythic person. A discussion, however, arose upon the question in the seventeenth century between the critics and the "Areopagites."

It would be extremely interesting if we could point to the monastery where the first general Church History, bearing the name of "Eusebius Pamphili," was composed. If "Cassiodore" denotes the Calabrian monastery in a district where there were many Greeks, it may have been there that the "Tripartite History" was composed. But when they pretend that it was rendered into Latin from the Greek authors, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, by his friend Epiphanius, this is a tale which should probably be read in the inverse sense. About Eusebius we learn the book was the peculiar delight of "Haymo of Halberstadt," and that he made an Epitome of it. But once more it is the great Abbot of Trithemius who appears to be above all master of Ecclesiastical History. He discusses the story of Apollonius of Tyana and the fabulous propensities of the Greeks in a way that hints how thoroughly old models were studied by the best of the Benedictine artists.

The stories of the Crusades, attributed to "Robert of Rheims," "Fulcher of Chartres," "Guibert, Abbot of Nogent," and some others, are all Benedictine productions. These fall under Sacred Story, as their object was the "Recovery of the Holy Land." It is presumable that they were useful in stimulating that anti-Mohamedan feeling which was aroused by the perils which threatened Western Europe after the capture of Constantinople by the Turks.

The object of the abbots in meddling with what they termed Profane History at all was that they might teach their monks and all under their influence how vain were all the pleasures and praises of "the world," and to wean them from the love of it. Their feats of interpolating and mangling the Roman classics I have referred to in another place. They had thus contrived to confirm the falsehood that Christianity began in the early days of the Roman Empire, and had never ceased to exist in some form down to the Revival of Letters. They are proud to quote our countrymen, Sir John Marsham and Antony Wood, who insisted that all our knowledge of "English History" before the Reformation was derived from "the monks," although none of our countrymen were aware that "the monks" were not an irregular band or succession of occasional writers, but a knot of systematic artists. The long string of Benedictine writers under various *noms de plume* need not here be cited. So soon as we quit the shade of St. Albans, and inquire at what time any member of the general public knew of these writings and perused them, the answer can be given with the greatest clearness, decision, and emphasis, "Not until the reign of King Henry VIII."

Father Mabillon thought the Chronicle of Fontanelle to be of "the ninth century," and to be the oldest specimen of this kind of composition in existence. However, the "History of the Abbots of Wearmouth" ascribed to "the Venerable Bede" has the prior claim; only, it should be remembered that this precious work was not brought to light until the seventeenth century. Fulda and St. Gall also produce "ninth century" Chronicles; but their literary activity cannot have begun before the time of Abbot Trithemius, whose "Annals of Hirschau" should be compared in this connection. The Chronicle of Monte Cassino is assigned to "the eleventh century," also that of Gemblours in the bishopric of Namur, and many others.

By one of the curious accidents common in the case of monastic literature in the thirteenth century, all the chronographers suddenly vanish, and the *Monasteriologi* did not numerously addict themselves to labour during the following age. In the fifteenth century the inertia of the monks increases, and we find the inevitable Trithemius declaiming upon the subject towards the close of that age. A bright exception to the general paucity of labourers in this field is, however, furnished by England, who can point to the Benedictines, "Hugh Candid" and his story of Peterborough, Joscelin and his "Chronicle of Bury," John of Wallingford with his list of the defunct brethren of the profession of St. Alban, Matthew Paris' "Chronica Majora" of St. Albans, and his "Gesta" of the twenty-two abbots of the same monastery, Matthew of Westminster and his "Res Gestæ" at Westminster. But it will be shown that none of these chroniclers were writing till the sixteenth or late fifteenth century.

If we could certainly fix upon a Benedictine who at the time of printing was able and willing to furnish a correct and authenticated list of the writers of the Order and of their extant writings, there might be an end at once to the discussion on the antiquity of their literature. The difficulty is still to find a secular scholar who examined and verified their lists. Now, the Benedictines must have told John Leland, who made the tour of the English monasteries about the years 1533-39, that "William of Gillingham," a Canterbury monk, had made a Bibliography of all the Benedictine writings. Their tale was false; for our famous Abbot Trithemius of Spanheim knows nothing about such a work. On the contrary, he is said to deplore the fact that the Order had no catalogue of its illustrious literary men, and himself sets about the work with greater zeal than judgment, as the historians of 1754 say. This is one of the most striking pieces of evidence which goes to prove that it was in the very time when literary study began to flourish in Germany that the whole system of fiction was laid down. Cluny, another great seat of this activity, seems to have been later in the field.

Benedictine
biblio-
graphers.

I would now offer to the consideration of the reader a document of considerable importance with reference to the question of the origin and epoch of Benedictine histories. It is the "Claustal Discourse on History addressed to the Fathers of the Sacred Congregation of Bursfeld by the Abbot of Erfurt, in the year 1481."*

The Abbot
of Erfurt on
History.

In the usual flowery, somewhat schoolboyish style of the monks, the good abbot compares History to the sun; for as there can be no light nor warmth

* "Hist. Rei Litt. Ord. S. Benedicti," 1754, Pars 2, p. 423.

apart from the sun, so there can be no authority or stability in human affairs without history. God Himself has left to us in the Books commonly called the Bible nothing but history. Except the poetical books, all is "pure story" written with Divine pen, full of most weighty matters. The Prophets tell Stories. The most holy Gospels are simply a book of Stories, the Passion of the Lord is Story, and nothing more. In preaching and exposition you must have Story, and can do nothing without it. Story is soothing as the song whereby the mother lulls the crying child to sleep. Poets wrap up their mysteries, sacred and profane, in figments—that is, tales ingeniously feigned and painted.

The good abbot is emphatic on the point: *The whole of Theology is an historical study.* Legists quote their Acts, which are histories, good or bad. Medical men rely on reason and experience; and this is combined of many years' stories. Apart from History the whole of Art is lame and stunted. History is diffused through the whole of Philosophy, whether speculative or practical. Mathesis relies on observations, that is, on History. Each age and sex, every human being, great and small, delights in story. When the clowns talk with one another in taverns, they are eager for stories, they want to know what has happened in the neighbourhood, what news there is of war or peace. In a word, *Story* rules, adorns, delights, and sustains the whole world.

The Abbot of Erfurt, after this eloquent statement, proceeds to express his wonder at the fact that Historical Study (without which no man can be soundly educated) is only taught so coldly, so poorly, so awkwardly in our monasteries, "when it is taught at all." Again, he

is emphatic: "*Sacred and Profane History must be conjoined, if we would more accurately know, and more studiously understand, the Divine providence by which all things are governed.* Therefore a learned Master of History ought to have been appointed in all the monasteries to inform the younger brethren—nay, the elder brethren (for these are mostly babes in the study)—faithfully at certain hours. How great would be the gain from this, more than of silver or of gold! how great the experience of affairs! how great the influence and veneration to our Order!

"The writers on Natural History," he continues, "have noticed various monsters, but I have been unable to find a brainless one. Man, indeed, according to Plato, is a wonder monster, as the Most Holy Trinity shows, and points out in him their highest artifice, wisdom, clemency, and goodness, and man shows in little the wonders of the whole world. He, forsooth, who is ignorant of History I would call a monster, but in another sense." The heads of the Sacred Congregation are then vehemently exhorted to see to it that this Divine study flourishes. They must shun—"Monstrum illud horrendum, cui lumen rationis ademptum"—the *ignorance of history!* "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

The Abbot of Erfurt has been amazed, his tongue has cleaved to the roof of his mouth, his utterance has been choked, when he has found prelates of the Order of St. Benedict actually more dumb than fishes when they were questioned about the founders and the fore-runners in the monasteries. They had nothing to say, or they were confused and hesitating, utterly ignorant of all antiquity. "The Institutes of our Order are not to idle, to eat, or drink, or sing Psalms in the choir, or

pray in the cell, but to beset the schools, and in them faithfully to learn sacred letters and good arts and sciences. Among these History triumphs and rules as a Queen given us by God."

The following exhortations show how novel and how irksome to the generality of the abbots was any literary task. "If you agree among yourselves and make this statute, so that any prelate ought to be anxious about writing the *Annals* or *History* of his monastery, what better, more useful, etc., could be done? Suppose the abbot himself has no leisure, surely he can delegate a brother to the work. How useful this work, were it but carried out! Every monastery would have its privileges, documents, and acts in a small compass, like Homer, in a nutshell." Further observations show the intense anxiety about the conservation of privileges in time of persecution, and about the discovery of founders; which led to the construction of so great a multitude of foundation legends.

Certainly the good abbot insists that "the historian must be a lover of truth, who will not knowingly write anything but what has happened. But if you are sometimes deceived by a false narrative, wearing the appearance of truth, you will be pardoned by good and candid men." It would have been more to the point if the abbot had pointed out where the registers were, if any, which supplied the materials to the would-be historian. But he continues to the end in the same vague manner of declaration.

"You are not human without History. We are not monks without it; nay, without History none can be saved. The venerable saying came down from heaven: *Know thyself!* How are you to know yourself without History? 'Tis History that tells you how the holiest

man chose this life in preference to all the delights of the world. The Passion of the Lord is our exaltation, and exaltation our consolation and eternal salvation. Who ever taught or learned it without History? It is admitted, indeed, that St. Benedict himself despised the study of letters in his desire to please God. And yet he did not despise History; for St. Gregory the Great, in writing St. Benedict's Life, wrote nothing but historical narrations."

But it is needless to quote more of this tiresome declamation, which, if composed in 1481, concurs with other evidence to prove that literary culture was yet in its infancy among the generality of the abbots. As for their distinction of truth and falsehood in writing, it is by no means that which obtains with the common sense of the world. It would be easy to prove, from other parts of Benedictine writing, that plausible and well-executed fiction in the interests of the Order is thoroughly orthodox, and that mere adherence to plain matter of fact is regarded as a dull or even a dangerous habit.

The date assigned to this wonderful sermon may be nearly correct; and if so the document sheds a valuable sidelight upon the state of ignorance in the monasteries about twenty years before Martin Luther (according to the tradition) pounced with delight upon a complete copy of the Latin Bible in that same monastery of Erfurt.

Father Mabillon is universally admitted to be the founder of the diplomatic art or science. Diplomatic study. Before his time, in other words, there was no method or principle in the study of the MSS. which had only been gradually brought to light from the recesses of the monasteries from the time of the Invention of

Printing. About 200 years ago great suspicion arose as to the genuineness, especially, of the Archives of the French monasteries; and Mabillon, with that ardour of loyalty to his Order which is the mainspring of motive with the true Benedictine, addressed himself to the task of defence.

Fathers Henschen and Papebroch of the Jesuits had made their vigorous attack on the Benedictine Archives, especially those of St. Denis. They were followed by Father Germon and again by Father Hardouin, who may be considered the most audacious, perhaps because the most knowing and clear-sighted of all ecclesiastical critics. The story of this controversy would be well worth writing afresh from the standpoint of dispassionate criticism; meanwhile, this much may be said, that it is remarkable any such controversy should have occurred among members of the priesthood at all; in nowise remarkable that it should speedily have been quelled by authority. The cool lay critic will certainly decide that the Jesuits had reason on their side in demanding proof of the antiquity and genuineness of the Benedictine Archives. The Jesuits must have had good reason to suspect that the elder Order in the Church was not nearly so ancient as it believed itself to be, and good reason to know that a mass of its Instruments were forged. But had they been encouraged to push the argument as far as Hardouin insisted on pushing it, had they firmly denied, for example, that the authentic records of the Catholic Church reached so high as a century before the rise of the Society of Jesus, or the first meeting of the Council of Trent, a revolution must have occurred in the world of Church life and letters. I have alluded to this controversy in another place. Mabillon's treatise on Diplomatic and his contemporary

Montfaucon's treatise on Palæography remain the standard works in this department. When the question is asked, "How old is this style, this handwriting?" and they reply, "It is of such or such a century," the rejoinder must be made, "It is the same Order of monks who have arranged the scheme of centuries, and who have produced corresponding handwritings. You cannot prove the writing to be genuine unless you have proved the chronology to be genuine, nor the chronology to be genuine unless you have ascertained the age of the handwriting." Their apology runs in a vicious circle.

It needs hardly be said that the Benedictines had no need of critical study until, with the spread of knowledge and the spirit of inquiry, their pretensions were exposed to public examination. The reader may peruse in this connection the particulars of a controversy raised by Cardinal Baronius on the question whether "Gregory the Great" was in reality a Benedictine monk. How ridiculous it is to talk of a critical defence of the position on the ground that Gregory himself bears witness that he is an abbot of the Order, when such self-testimonies are an essential part of the system! When it is argued against a pretended Gregorian work that it was not published before 1537, and that no MS. of it is extant, this is an argument which applies in its measure to a great mass of "Patristic" writings, which only began to be heard of during the early sixteenth century. But when, on the other hand, it is insisted upon that the missionaries sent by St. Gregory into England were Benedictines, this begs the question. The tale is a Benedictine tale, but the whole question of their historic credibility must be raised at this point, and how far back their records extended at the time of the Revival.

Other attacks made by the Jesuit Father Briet upon the Benedictines as "Plagiaries of the Saints" may be passed by. It must be allowed in fairness that they have some excuse for the numerous false writings produced in their workshops, that, unlike the Jesuits who are subject to a general, each monastery had, as a rule, its own superior. The body should not be made responsible for the faults of some of its members, the critical laxity of some of the abbots. But amidst unimportant discussions like these, the radical question has always been evaded, namely: When was a literature written by men under the same discipline and rule schemed and elaborated? Idle questions as to where are the relics of St. Benedict and Scholastica and the bones of St. Denis may amuse and divert the mind from the main question, the solution of which is one of the most important tasks that the critic of literature could ever impose upon himself.

The same problem still confronts us. When did the class called Antiquarii, *i.e.* keepers and copiers of MSS., come into existence? When was a writing-room (scriptorium) found a necessity? These questions have never been with probability answered; and as one peruses the notices relating to the matter in the usual string of writers from "Cassiodore" down to Trithemius, the old clouds of suspicion gather again. We may, however, safely infer from the silence on the subject in so important a writer as John Leland, that there were few writing-rooms or museums in any English monastery in his time.

It is needless to detain the reader with a discussion on the relative merits of the styles of different monks. We are told that some of the monks wrote in a barbarous age and perpetrated

Antiquarian
study.

Polite
literature
and
philology.

barbarisms. We naturally find what we seek ; and more elegant Latin in an elegant age. But we are no competent judges of the kind of Latin that ought to have been written in imaginary ages. The general fact, upon all the evidence that can be collected, stands out clearly enough, that the culture of Latin was being revived during the latter half of the fifteenth century, and the culture of Greek somewhat later, and among a very limited class of students. The epochal Trithemius deplores the want of polite culture among the monks, and himself is perhaps the first abbot to apply himself to Hebrew under the guidance of a Jewish convert. We can well believe that during the sixteenth century a thorough cultivation of the Latin Classics with the writings of the Four Doctors set in ; but this went on *pari passu* with the general march of education.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BENEDICTINE SYSTEM OF CHRONOLOGY.

THE question of Chronology is so important, and seems so little understood, that I may venture to detain the reader with a few general observations.

There comes a time to every powerful family, tribe, nation, and corporation when it needs to reflect upon its age, and to give some account to itself and to the world of its antiquity. In rude times, and in the absence of all registers and records of the past, any such family will readily persuade itself that it is equally old with the earth; or at least that it can trace back its ancestry to the great recovery of mankind from the primæval flood.

The chrono-
logical
passion.

Every people of culture has passed through a stage of such willing belief; and the legends of the Greeks, the people of highest culture, bear abundant witness in their case to this law of the imagination. When an imaginary event, such as a creation of mankind from the earth, has been fixed upon, the poets can proceed to reckon downwards; and, by the construction of a series of fictitious persons and generations, to make out what appears to be a living and unbroken connection with the origin of things. Imaginary events of another kind are fixed upon lower down—a "Siege

of Troy," a "Return of Herakleides." These events, being created by the poets, working under patriotic passion, become real to willing belief, articles in the national creed which it were almost treason to doubt. Poetic chronology, laid down with no help from authentic registers, is nothing but "plausible fiction," to borrow the favourite phrase of Mr. Grote. It is enough if when the people begins to listen to what is called Story, it can persuade itself that it is as old as any nation upon earth; and that, however commonplace or dismal its own recent memories may be, it was at a distant time in intercourse with divine and heroic beings. But History, in the modern acceptation of the term, does not begin until you have evidence that a people knows the value of its contemporary facts, and has learned to keep accurate registers.

It satisfied the pride of the Romans in their literary age to say that their Romulus had founded the city more than 700 years ago, as it satisfied the Greeks in the time of Herodotus to say that their ancestors had been present at the siege of Troy more than 700 years before that poet's time. For, confessedly, Herodotus was a poet rather than a historian in the modern acceptation. It was ever the poets who constructed that system of rude perspective and of rough time-reckoning by means of genealogies which are passed for authentic record of the past.

When the passions which stimulate this inventive process are once understood, it will be seen that the effect has been in the case of every people of culture to lengthen immensely its imaginary age, and so to place at an illusory distance from us objects which are in fact comparatively near to our time. When we

lay down the poet and the mythologist, and coolly survey the durable monuments of Greece and Rome and Egypt, of the Arabians, the Jews, and the Holy Romans, the sense of illusion steals over us, and we almost prefer to form our own rude guess at the comparative antiquity of the stones from the mere evidence of the stones themselves. At least, we turn back to our poets with some preparation of judgment for the fresh consideration of their schemes.

The Mohammedans found it necessary at some time—much later, probably, than their conventional dates would represent—to lay down a chronological scheme. They were strictly logical—that is, theological—in their principles. They said that with the Eternal one day was as a thousand years. They applied this principle to explain the duration of the world. They appear to have argued that the last and greatest of the Prophets must appear in the seventh day—that is, the seventh millenary of the world. Consequently, he did so appear in the fulness of times; and the great religious Organization which they contemplated in its most glorious days was the witness to the truth of his mission and its divine success.

With the Jews it was different. They were a comparatively poor, feeble, and dispersed folk. They had never possessed a territory, a military force, except in retrospective and prospective dream. Their time was yet to come. The Regal Sprout from David's stock was yet to make his epiphany. To the question, How old is the world? their chronologers replied with the Mohammedans, It is so many days, that is, so many millenaries, old. But in reckoning the number of those mystic days they differed from the Mohammedans, declaring that the Messiah would appear

in the sixth millenary of the world. It was not until the revival of learning that the Jewish scholars began to reduce the mystic retrospect of their sacred writers to a definite scheme. The Spanish Rabbin, Abraham Zacuto, brought this scheme down to about the year 5260 of the world, according to his computation of its age. He was followed by the Rabbi David Ganz, in his chronological scheme entitled *Zemach David*. Ganz flourished in the latter part of the sixteenth century; and it is an illustration of the vagueness caused by the absence of exact registers that he cannot give precisely the time of his predecessor, Zacuto. He believes it to have been late in the fifteenth century.

The abbots of the Order of St. Benedict followed the Jews in adopting the mystical principle that the time for the appearance of the Messiah was the sixth millenary "day" of the world. But since the monks, in opposition to the Jews, maintained that the Messiah had already come in the person of God Incarnate, they said, in pursuance of this logic, that Jesus Christ was born some time after the year 5000 of the world. This strife of principles, derived not from knowledge, but from ecclesiastical ambition, led to the greatest discrepancies. As culture advanced in the sixteenth century, scholars, ignorant of the mystical basis of the system, treated the Latin, Hebrew, Greek Bibles, treated Josephus and other books of Story as if they had been registers, and tried, on what they thought to be scientific principles, to fix the age of the world anew. Joseph Scaliger (1582), whose name is a landmark in this subject, reduced the age of the world to 3950 years at the time of Augustus. About a century later, Archbishop Usher raised the number to 4004. It is only in our own time, when the speculations

of natural philosophers on the antiquity of the world have altered our conception of the Past, that men are beginning to understand both that the natural world is of immense duration, and that human art is comparatively young.

The age of the world was determined by ecclesiastical convenience, or by calculations upon rough data in ecclesiastical books. When the Benedictine Fathers of St. Maur began, in the eighteenth century, the compilation of their work, "L'Art de Vérifier les Dates," there were no less than 200 different computations, many of which they have given. The interval between the highest, which was derived from the Mohammedans, and the lowest, which was derived from the Jews, is no less than 3500 years. Yet, since the completion of that voluminous work, no scholar appears to have come forward to teach that such computations are valueless to science, except in so far as they throw light upon the passions and operations of the ecclesiastical mind.

We come now to the question: When did the Catholic Church fix upon the æra of the Incarnation, and begin to employ it in annual records? In other words, when did the expression, *Anno Domini*, or *Anno Christi*, or the year from the Incarnation, or the Nativity, come into use? Here again the Benedictines are our sole informants, and they give their information, as usual, in the form of another system of fables, which can be shown, with some clearness, not to have been laid down until some time during the Revival of Letters.

I would remind the reader again of what I have elsewhere noticed, that the important Catalogue of the monk of Bury constantly leaves a blank after the

The Æra
of the
Incarnation.

words "flourished in the year of Christ," showing that at the time it was sketched out the chronological scheme was not ready. I would remind him also that some of the Pilgrims' narratives and the Paston Letters, *e.g.*, which are set down to the late fifteenth century, are undated by the year. The mode of dating by the annual feasts of the Church alone, as in a mass of documents consulted by Mr. Thorold Rogers, continued for some time in the fifteenth century. Another custom was that of dating by the year of an abbot or of a king, and that in a vague and uncertain manner. Let me refer a moment to Mr. Rogers' studies.

Mr. Rogers observes that with the year 1259 continuous information as to the state of agriculture and prices begins. He proceeds to point out a phænomenon which should have excited his suspicion, viz. the curious *uniformity* with which changes in habits and customs make their appearance in Mediæval records. The changes, for example, in handwriting, he says, are so marked that experts have little difficulty in determining an epoch by that test. The style of Henry III. is quite different from that of Edward I., which again is contrasted with that of Edward II., and this again with that of Edward III. and Richard II. The "*change is in all cases sudden and almost simultaneous!*" And then, corresponding to these changes in handwriting, there are sudden changes in the economy of agriculture! Such changes are, in fact, due to nothing but art and craft: to suppose them real is to suppose something unnatural, and therefore incredible.

Mr. Thorold Rogers' "Hist. of Agriculture," etc.

Sudden changes in handwriting.

The supposed thirteenth-century Records, on which Mr. Rogers depended, are, in fact, part and parcel of the

same system of which "Matthew Paris" is the exponent; who was not known until the sixteenth century. It was resolved, *e.g.*, that in the reign of Henry III. the Barons should be no more the tyrants, but the leaders of the people, that Simon de Montfort should become as a saint, or a "Cromwell of the thirteenth century," in the phrase of Mr. Rogers. Mr. Rogers' first volume is founded mainly on Rolls of Merton College; and, by the way, it confirms what is known from other sources, that the personality of "Wiclif," so notoriously associated with that corporation, has never been discovered.

In his next volume Mr. Rogers drew upon a larger selection of alleged "Records." But here he makes the important note on the confusion of style in designating the three kings of the name of Edward. They are not yet known as First, Second, and Third; so that the student is foiled in the attempt to discover exact dates. Again, in the Records of Ramsey Abbey, the year given is that of the abbot, and the day is designated by the nearest Feast of the answering religion. The true explanation is that these documents were written at a time when men had not yet learned to date by the year of the Incarnation.

Mr. Rogers makes the inference from the use of a barbarous Latin in these writings that the language must have been generally understood even by traders in the fourteenth century—a position very hard to accept.

But when we come, in Mr. Rogers' third volume, to the records of the fifteenth century, we find our explorer simply adding his voice to that of a chorus of writers who deplore the extreme darkness that appears to fall on the world during that momentous age. Merton College becomes scant or

Blank from
the fifteenth
century.

barren of information. Accounts are not kept or carelessly kept. Then Mr. Rogers alludes to Magdalen College and to suspicions of "sharp practice" in connection with the estates of Sir John Fastolf. Had Mr. Rogers traced out the geneses of the Fastolf and the Paston legends, he would have seen that it took its rise after the Invention of Printing, and that the Benedictines of the Holm at Norwich and the mendicant friars were especially interested in it. In the time of Elizabeth the tale of the great warrior under the three Henries had become a sort of national epic, until the great Dramatist converted these heroics into burlesque, and gave us the immortal Falstaff.

Mr. Rogers observes that the documents of Corpus Christi College *are unbroken only from the reign of Edward VI.* Their value even then is dubious. For the space, then, of more than 150 years, the historian of social history has practically nothing that he can use with confidence. Not until the Statute of Elizabeth came into force, by which wheat and malt prices were regularly registered every six months by the corporations concerned, were records in any exact sense to be found. This, in general, is the story not merely of agricultural archives, but of the national archives in general, as will be pointed out elsewhere. Until about the time of Elizabeth the whole anxiety of corporations was directed to the invention of mock antiquities in their own interest.

When Mr. Rogers says, in his sixth volume, that the House of Commons in the seventeenth century "used fifteenth-century precedents" in legislation, the meaning is that "precedents," so-called, were freely invented by the great parties in the State from the time of Elizabeth, and still more that

Supposed
"prece-
dents."

of James. Let me emphasize all that Mr. Rogers has said about the effect produced upon the imagination by the study of the supposed records before the Tudors. Looking back to Edward III. and the second Richard, you seem to perceive "Labour in the sunshine," nay, English culture as a whole in the sunshine. Then gathers a long dense cloud for about 200 years, until it clears away to reveal the shocking miseries of the lower orders in the reign of Elizabeth.

The illusion is due to the fact on the positive side that we have been educated under the glamour of impassioned retrospective art, which puts back its ideals in the far past; and on the negative side to the absence of all trustworthy records until a time much later than is commonly supposed. But now to return to the question before us: When did the practice of dating by the year from the Nativity of Christ set in?

The Benedictines had a saying, that chronology and geography are "The two eyes of History." They are aware also that any exact chronology must depend upon astronomy. It is also clear from the writings ascribed to their "Bede" and others, that their knowledge of astronomy was in its inception during the sixteenth century. They fixed upon the Incarnation of God as the great ecclesiastical-poetical era from which they were to date the writings in course of preparation. But in the attempt to define the number of years that had elapsed since that ideal event, they fell into great blunders, which are admitted in their own writings. Only part of the truth in this matter is, however, admitted by them; for they pretend that their blunders came to an end in the Norman time, whereas the writings they refer to the eleventh century were in reality continued in the sixteenth.

It is necessary at this point to remind the reader that a careful study of the evidence as a whole shows that the knowledge of astronomy was but beginning in Europe during the Revival. The Arabians led the way; they introduced the "Almagest" or Syntaxis of Ptolemy (named in the Canterbury Tales), which began to be read in the reign of Henry VIII. It is true that the Arabian tradition produces a line of illustrious scholars from so early as the ninth or tenth century, and the Jewish tradition from the twelfth. But this is due to the proleptic habits already so often dwelt upon. The mere matter of fact is that the science ascribed to Avicenna, to Averroes and many others began only to be diffused from Spain during the late fifteenth century.

It is true also that the monks and friars, in their lists of illustrious scholars, plant their early astronomers so high as the thirteenth century. But a critical examination of the particulars relating to Sacrobosco and to Roger Bacon will show that the writings ascribed to these ideal scholars were only beginning to be known about the middle of the sixteenth century. The most "ancient and classical" work of monkish astronomy is set down to Joannes de Sacrobosco, *alias* John of the Holy Bush, or Halifax. Our earliest informant in regard to him is John Leland, the royal commissioner and bibliographer under Henry VIII., whose notes appear to have been penned about the year 1550. Leland imagines that Sacrobosco must have been of Halifax, the seat of the wool-trade. He imagines that the monk studied at Oxford, and also at Paris. He knows that a work on the "Ecclesiastical Compute" has been set down to him. He knows little or nothing more.

The study
of
astronomy.

Joannes de
Sacrobosco.

Sacrobosco is said to have died in Paris, and to have been buried in the Church of St. Maturin. Leland does not give the date of Sacrobosco, but Bale, who followed him, adds that Sacrobosco is said to have "flourished" in the year 1256 from the Nativity. It is impossible, therefore, to find any evidence of the mere idea or idol of this scholar before the sixteenth century. In the mere inception of our culture we find Leland puffing the fame of Sacrobosco as an inimitable scholar, although the treatises ascribed to him show but an elementary knowledge of astronomy and chronology. The same bibliographer mentions Regiomontanus* as a great mathematician, but one who, though he is supposed to have "flourished" about two centuries after Sacrobosco, had not superseded him. Philip Melanchthon wrote a preface to the work of Sacrobosco on the "Ecclesiastical Compute," and awarded to him magnificent praise.† There is, adds Leland, a work of the monks on "Algorism" in the Petrine library of Cambridge.

The speediest way by which the student may convince himself of the vanity of this tradition about John of Halifax, is by transferring the point of inquiry to the time of zealous scholars like Usher, Selden, and especially Greaves, whose journeys to the East in quest of Oriental MSS. are well worth recalling. Greaves in 1652 published an astronomical treatise from the tradition of Shah Cholgi, who is said to have flourished about 1461. Here we discover a series of supposed astronomers in the West from Gerard of Cremona in the thirteenth century to George Purbach and Regiomontanus in the fifteenth. It becomes clear that in the first half of the seventeenth century our

* That is, Jo. Müller of Königsberg.

† "Comm. de Scriptt. Brit.," c. cclxxvi.

scholars were still toiling to make out the history of astronomy and chronology, and that the beginnings of these efforts cannot possibly be dated earlier than the epoch of the Revival of Learning. But under the mechanical habit of the time, every branch of culture was pushed up for its origin into dark ages of which nothing was in reality known.

If you study the legend of the Gresham family and of the College in Bishopsgate founded (they Gresham College. say) about 1576, you will find in particulars handed down about the Fosters and other early professors, that the general study of astronomy, derived from the Arabians, was coming into England only at the time that Francis Bacon lay in his cradle; and that no immense interval can separate this new knowledge from that of the monasteries. The name of Melanchthon may mark the time when the work of Sacrobosco began to be known. The associations of Purbach and of Regiomontanus are with Cardinal Bessarion and that intellectual activity in Italian ecclesiastical circles in which the name of the cardinal so strongly figures.

We come to a very celebrated name, the glory of the Franciscan Order, Roger Bacon.

Now, "Boston of Bury," though he sets Roger Bacon. down the Franciscan house at Oxford as one of his literary places, makes no mention whatever of Roger Bacon. Yet Bacon is said to have died there in 1248. Polydore Vergil, always a good negative witness in respect to the beginnings of English culture, says nothing of Bacon. John Leland, on the other hand, is a good witness to the existence in his time of the The idea of the wizard. vulgar and prevalent opinion that men of science were an uncanny folk. He associates Bacon with

reputed magicians, an Apuleius, a Merlin, or a contemporary Cornelius Agrippa. Any approach to the tree of knowledge was an imitation of the first transgression which brought death into the world. An inventor courted the fate of Prometheus. He was in alliance with infernal powers, or, what was the same thing, he was opposed to the dogma of the clergy. Yet such bold men were objects of great curiosity; they humoured the fools by hiding beneath the mask of the wizard, while they turned eyes bright with intelligence upon the faces of the few who had the sense to appreciate them. Disguise and secrecy were the necessary resources of our greatest men.

An illustration of the habits of mind in this respect during the sixteenth century may be found in Leland's discussion of Merlin, who was referred to a thousand years before his time by the Benedictine who writes as "Geoffrey of Monmouth." It is absurd, Leland says, to suppose that Merlin, the eponym of Maridunum or Caermarthen, was of dæmonic parentage, according to the old wives' fable; but his mother may have been a nun. She may have disguised her shame in the fable. The dæmon may signify some scientific man or philosopher in that obscure age. The important circumstance is that, as Leland learned from the people at Maridunum, there had been—to use classical forms—a cœnobium of sacred virgins in old times in that town. They pointed to its remains, and said that Merlin was there born of a vestal. Leland proceeds in an interesting note to discuss various traditions about Merlin and the time of Arthur. It never occurs to him that he could not possibly bridge over the immense interval between the time of Prince Arthur, his contemporary, son of King

The wizard
Merlin:
a type.

Henry VII., and that of the British prince and the great British sage. In the utter absence of chronological perspective, it was equally easy to believe that Merlin had flourished in the fifth century as that Roger Bacon had flourished in the thirteenth.

Leland can only guess that Bacon, like Sacrobosco, studied at Oxford and Paris. It is merely proof that there was a strong connection between Oxford and Paris in his time, and that Paris had the higher repute. He found a system of literature laid down at Oxon and elsewhere; he found serious blemishes in it; but being himself apparently a straightforward man, he did not suspect that it was nothing but a system. In Merton Library or on Merton's bookshelf he found a tract ascribed to Roger Bacon on the "Praises of the Mathematical Art," dedicated to Pope Clement IV. Here also he found one "William of Sherwood" extolled to the skies as a scientific man. He proceeds to complain bitterly of what he calls the extreme carelessness of writers of the thirteenth century in giving the surnames of "illustrious men." The *proper* name was constantly suppressed, and a name was supplied from a native place or a dignity.

Roger Bacon was guilty, he says, of this folly. Instead of speaking of "William of Sherwood," he refers to "William Chancellor of Lincoln." It was a common error "at that time," and let it pass. But Leland petulantly adds, "I would take my sacred oath by all the Muses, that there is nothing in the whole of this labour of mine that has more tormented me than the crass carelessness of writers in suppressing the surnames of writers. Who can discover the personality of 'William Chancellor of Lincoln?' The whole 'mistake' was that of the monks and friars, who,

not content with their own names, excogitated new portents of words." There was, however, no mistake; there was deliberate invention. The origin of Merton College itself could not be ascertained by either Leland or Polydore. The latter simply repeats the fable that it was founded by William Merton, Chancellor of England, about the year 1285.

I will not weary the reader with further operations in what is called destructive criticism—that is, the analysis and exposure of collaborated fiction—but proceed to offer a positive opinion on the rise of the Bacon mythology. During the Revival, the friars at Merton may have felt the necessity of cultivating the little science that was current. They selected the old English name of Bacon for the designation of their ideal or idol scholar. Some wrote short tracts on astronomy and alchymics and the like, others on mystical theology. They ascribed these to one or the other of their Bacons, for they had two of them. They drew up a catalogue of their scholars, and referred them to an earlier age. They made so much noise about Bacon that scholars came to believe that there had been such a wizard, the Miracle of the thirteenth century. And yet, when men inquired after the works of the Miracle about the end of Henry VIII.'s reign, all that could be produced were some thirty of those poor scientific and theological tracts. But the "Opus Majus"—that work in which Roger is supposed to be anticipating Francis Bacon—was *not forthcoming*. Poor Leland believes, indeed—still bewildered by the tales of his monks and friars—that a vast number of Roger Bacon's works had been scattered through the libraries of Britain. But alack! what has become of them? Cut from their tethering, thieved, ill kept,

Bacon
myths and
Merton
College.

mutilated, torn, "you might as well attempt to collect the leaves of the Sibyl as to tell their names!"

After Leland, Roger Bacon's greatness increased, as the Baconian writings from the pens of Oxford and Paris students were greatly swollen in bulk. He is linked with the equally mythical "Robert Greathead" of Lincoln. Under his name you may read the story of the struggles and sufferings of our earliest lovers of genuine knowledge, fumbling along their hard path toward the light. You may discern their impatience of the sloth, the bigotry and the vices of their brethren. You will find the anti-papalists and reformers among them. It is to Roger and to Robert of Lincoln that the scheme of overthrowing the kingdom of anti-Christ by the weapons of intelligence is ascribed. But not until the time of Queen Elizabeth did men begin to hear of a complete system of science under the Baconian name. The story of John Dee, who died in 1608, a man of science and a reputed wizard, whose pathetic story repeats in many particulars that of the mythical friar, is full of instruction in this relation. And not until 1733 was the "Opus Majus" printed in London for William Bowyer, under the editorship of Dr. Jebb.

Robert Bacon appears to have been the idol of the Dominicans; and some have supposed that Leland's text has been corrupted, because he ^{Robert} ^{Bacon.} names him not. The fact merely is that Robert is a discovery of Bale and Pits, neither of them men of good credit. But one of our truly greatest Englishmen, the acute Thomas Fuller, penetrated to the core of the whole Bacon tradition. His words are still worth the attention of those who in historical study persist in worshipping the idol rather than in studying the idol-makers at their work. Says Fuller—

“For my own part, I behold the name of Bacon in Oxford not as of an individual man, but a corporation of men; no single cord, but a twisted cable of many together. As all the acts of strong men of that nature are attributed to a Hercules, all the predictions of prophesying women to a Sibyl, so I conceive all the achievements of the Oxonian Bacons in their liberal studies are ascribed to one as chief of their name. And this in effect is confessed by the most learned and ingenious orator of that university.” He here refers to Sir Isaac Wake, author of the “*Rex Platonicus*.” Fuller adds that the Benedictine Trithemius names a “John Bacon,” elsewhere called “Baconthorpe.”

The same critic proceeds to laugh at the anachronism of making “Robert Bacon” read Philosophy in Brasenose College a hundred years before it was founded. He adds that the Cambridge Bacons, father and son, Nicholas and Francis, the one of Bennet, the other of Trinity College, hold the scales of desert against all of their name in all the world besides.*

Hearne, coming after Fuller, is confused about the two Bacons, Roger and Robert. Friar Wadding, the historian of the literary men of his Order, points out the anachronism in the tale told by Pits, who was writing at the beginning of the seventeenth century, to the effect that Roger was called to Rome by the General of the Order to answer a charge of magic arts.†

To bring this digression, occasioned by the name of Roger Bacon, to an end. Neither the Franciscans, nor any knot of scholars working under the shield of Bacon’s name, could have produced the “*Opus Majus*” until the

* “*Church History*, Cent. XV.,” p. 96.

† “*Annal. Min.*,” a. 1266 and 1278.

Revival: a fact which tends to account for the coincidences between that work and the "Novum Organum," more than once emphatically noticed by Hallam. At the end of the fifteenth century the study of astronomy could only have been beginning in the cloisters. And nowhere are the early astronomical mistakes of the Benedictines more keenly exposed than in the "Opus Majus" itself.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BENEDICTINE SYSTEM OF TRAVELLERS, GEOGRAPHERS,
AND NATURAL HISTORIANS.

It was essential to the literary system of the monks of the West that they should appear to have had from very early times a series of pious writers who had journeyed to the holy places in the East, and had recorded their impressions of travel. All the tales of the Hermits of the Thebaid, among which is that of "St. Porphyry" and his disciple Mark, who proceed thence to Jerusalem and to Gaza, spring from this source. There are other fibres in the network of legend connecting the monks of Egypt with those of Syria, and again with those of Italy and the West.

"St. Jerome" is said to have gone in company with
Pilgrim legends. "St. Eusebius of Cremona" and a pilgrim band from Italy to Cyprus, where they were duly received by "St. Epiphanius." Thence they proceed to Antioch, and are duly ordained by St. Paulinus the bishop. They repair to Jerusalem, and so to the Thebaid in Egypt on a visit to the hermits. Finally, they settle at Bethlehem, and found a monastery. The religious ladies of the order find their prototype in St. Paula, who is supposed about the same time to arrive from Rome at Sidon. She visits the "Tower of Elijah," the house of Cornelius, the centurion at Cæsarea, and the

house of St. Philip and his four daughters, the tomb of Queen Helena at Adiabene, who figures in the first Church history ; the Holy Sepulchre, the true Cross, the scenes of the Passion and of the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, and other places consecrated by canonical and extra-canonical legend. St. Paula also is made to pay a visit to the Egyptian hermits, and finally to retire to Bethlehem.

The "Epistles of St. Jerome," in which the particulars are to be found, are written with spirit, and with many dramatic touches. They were not coming into reading use until late in the sixteenth century ; and they may be understood as part of a great Church romance, through the allegorical veil of which may be discerned the state of monastic life in West and East during that and perhaps the preceding age. The necessities of Benedictine fiction required that the reader should be induced to transfer these pilgrim adventurers to an epoch a thousand years before the Revival of Letters.

Again : We are invited to believe that in the seventh century of the ecclesiastical era St. Antoninus visited the Holy Land. This saint also, after witnessing improbabilities on Mount Sion in connection with the "idol of the Saracens," duly wends his way to the hermits in Egypt. He travels to Mesopotamia, and so returns to his native Italy. It is thus made out that there had been settlements of monks in Syria and Egypt before the conquests of the Mohammedans.

Then,—with so much perseverance was the system of fiction carried out—another list of travellers after the time of the Arabian conquests is supplied by the Benedictines. There is Arculf, vaguely described as a French bishop, and certified by Adamnan, Abbot of

Iona, who is supposed to tell us that the returning pilgrim was carried by contrary winds to that island. Bede, in his turn, is made to offer a certificate in favour of Adamnan, who is said to have presented his book on Holy Places to a Northumbrian king—itsself the dictation of Arculf. The book shows the beginning of an acquaintance with Mohammedan history, and was composed at a time when the tolerance of Islam permitted, on certain conditions, free access to the East. It may be important to note, in passing, that in a book conceived as if written in the seventh or eighth century, the old Roman buildings are described as intact.

We are now introduced to an English pilgrim, viz., Willibald, who was the reputed son and also the father of a saint. St. Richard, the father, appears to owe his renown to the monks of Lucca, while the credit of the biography of Willibald is assigned to a nun of Heidenheim. It needs hardly to be added that there is no native English feeling in the story of the saint and his travels. It is enough if the apostolic succession of pilgrims has been preserved.

Naturally, in the brilliant time of Alfred, of Charlemagne, and of Haroun-el-Raschid, the stream of pilgrims to the East flowed strongly. "Bernard the Wise," of the famous cloister of Mont St. Michel in Brittany, is supposed to illustrate this period. But for critical purposes it is all-important to note that the book cannot be traced higher than the time of Sir Robert Cotton, and that the Rheims copy was not brought to light until the time of the Fathers of St. Maur. Dom Mabillon was its discoverer. But this monk was one of those travellers who had an interest in contrasting the superior culture of the Mohammedans with the rudeness and barbarism of the West. The direction of the

pilgrims is here by way of Egypt to Syria, as it is in the case of Fidelis, another French monk of the Order. In the narrative under the name of Frotmond, another Breton monk, keen interest in the monks of the Thebaid and in St. Cyprian of Carthage is again shown. This wandering is a penance; and the stern occupier of the Chair of St. Peter at this time is said to have been a Benedict.

In the next age—that of the obscure and incredible *par excellence*—the incredible Gerbert, or Sylvester II., is said to have made the pilgrimage. The tale of the Crusade under the instigation of Peter the Hermit of Amiens follows; and in the wake of the crusaders another Anglo-Saxon, “Saewulf,” is supposed to make the pilgrimage. This writer is a masked Benedictine, vouched for by another masked Benedictine, viz., “William of Malmesbury.” The narrative is made to fit in generally with the system of Norman fables, but the monk dates by the annual feasts, and not by the years from the Incarnation. The story of “Sigurd the Crusader” is vouched for by a Benedictine under the mask of “William of Tyre.” But not one of these monks was writing until far on in the Revival; nor could any considerable body of readers have been found for their tales until the seventeenth century.

In accordance with their system, Franciscan and Dominican pilgrims are allowed to appear on the scene during the thirteenth century. Marco Polo is also prophetically placed in the same age, although his work did not long precede the discovery of the Western Continents. And so at last we arrive at Maundeville, whose place is given as St. Albans, and whose time is stated to have been the brilliant close of the fourteenth century; but whose work only began to be known and read

during the sixteenth century. The book is in great part a compilation from preceding writers, and was probably written in French late in the fifteenth or in the beginning of the next century.

These works, then, originally inspired by the Benedictines, and all of them written by clergymen, may be used to reflect a certain amount of light upon the condition of thought and knowledge in the West concerning the East, at a time when in the East itself there was but the faintest acquaintance with the military or religious orders in Europe. They show that a dream-geography of Syria and the Orient has been made out from the study of the Bible, and that the monkish travellers, in constant correspondence with one another through all the principal monasteries, are going to the East in order to verify their dreams and establish them as a system. A few examples may be given.

They believe that the Holy City was the centre of the earth; and pretend to have seen a column in the middle of the city which cast no shadow at noon of the summer solstice. Thus the verse, Psalm lxxiv. 12, was verified. They can find the cave in which the Lord was born, and the desert of Quarantania, where he was tempted. They find a monastery and three churches on Mount Tabor, in accord with the prediction of St. Peter; because it is the same fraternity who wrote the legend and built the churches. The Colossians, to whom St. Paul wrote, are found in the people of Rhodes, where the Colossus stood. So "Saewulf." They strove to turn the mosque of Omar into the Temple of Solomon, near which is an oratory with the cradle of Christ, his bath, and the bed of the Virgin Mary. They can discover the place where the Apostles made the Creed. They think of Galilee as a chapel where the Lord

appeared after his Resurrection; and the Apostles were called Galileans because they often rested there. There is, however, a great city of Galilee by Mount Tabor. In the architectural sense it was in the Galilee of Mount Sion that Jesus appeared. They find at Cana no building but the monastery of St. Architriclin, having turned the general into a proper name.

Maundeville clearly shows in his Prologue, which may usefully be compared with other ecclesiastical prologues, that a pilgrim should not go to the Holy Land without having his mind thoroughly possessed by the theological poem of the Church: which teaches that it was hallowed by the precious Body and Blood of Christ. You must go thither prepared to find the best and most virtuous land of all the world, its heart and middle, for the philosopher says that "The virtue of things is in the middle." We are further informed that the land was left to us as a legacy by Christ, and that we are bound to claim our heritage and drive out the heathen and unbelieving men.

It would be tedious to criticize at length the tales in this curious book, which is perhaps tolerably well known; but it may be noticed in passing that the writer is in his way a good commentator on the legends of the Church, both canonical and extra-canonical. In a curious passage he witnesses to the priority of the vulgar Latin Testament over other versions. In the tomb of St. John at Ephesus (he says) there is naught but manna, which is called angels' meat, for his body was translated into Paradise. "And you shall understand that St. John caused his grave to be made there in his life, and laid himself therein all alive; and therefore, some men say that he did not die, but that he rests there till the day of doom. And in truth there is a great marvel,

for men may see there the earth of the tomb many times openly stir and move, as though there were living things under." The legend with which the monk was acquainted was that the Lord (John xxi. 22, 23) had said to St. Peter concerning the beloved disciple, "I will that he remain till I come," as we read in the Vulgate.

The pilgrim finds near Cairo the Seven Wells which our Lord made with one of his feet when he played with other children. The pyramids are, as usual, called the Barns of Joseph. At Sinai the burning lamps in the church of St. Catherine are supplied by the birds of the land, which fly annually thither with olive branches in their beaks, so teaching men to seek and worship that glorious Virgin. And behind the altar is the place where Moses saw our Lord God in a burning bush. There is, as usual, no perspective in these representations.

In spite of the denunciations of pagans or infidels in the Prologue, "Maundeville" is a good witness, in spite of himself, to the fact that the Moslems are older than the Christians in the religious tradition. It is they who guard with jealous reverence the tombs of the patriarchs at Hebron, and who suffer no Christians to enter therein unless by the special grace of the Sultan. It is they (he says) who hold Christians and Jews to be dogs, and say they should not enter so holy a place. But no desire is shown to ascertain what was the genuine Moslem tradition. On the contrary, in his chapter on the Koran, the legend of Mariam, Gabriel, and Isa is made, as usual, falsely to appear a corruption of the Christian legend, instead of its earlier form.

Yet in his desire to pass an edifying satire upon the morality of the West, he offers a high tribute to the culture of the Moslems. He finds that the Sultan of

Egypt is versed in French, the current medium of communication, and that he with his court are more civilized and religious than the Christians. "The Saracens ben good and faithful. For they keepen entirely the commandment of the holy book Alcoran, that God sent them by his messenger Mahomet; to the which, as they sayen, St. Gabriel, the angel, oftentime told the will of God."* One might imagine that Maundeville was cured by his travels and friendly intercourse with the Mohammedans of the prejudices of his education against the followers of "Saint Mahoun." He seems to have anticipated the thought of John Bunyan, "that the Turks had as good Scriptures to prove the Mahomet the Saviour, as we have to prove our Jesus is."

But it is not from Maundeville that we are to expect a purely matter-of-fact account of the lands he visited, and the humanity he observed. He knew—we may suppose—that he was desired to bring back confirmation of the tales he had learned in boyhood in the cloister of St. Albans, and that if he denied their veracity he would be laughed to scorn and treated as an infidel by men who had never crossed the Channel. So he humours his readers with the tale of Gog and Magog, with the tale of the Tailless men, and of the Madagascar bird which could carry elephants through the air. He prattles of the isle Mistorak, near the river Phison, of the Vale which is full of devils who guard treasures of gold and silver, and strangle the intruding robber.

Maundeville does not hesitate to assure us that he entered this Vale Perilous, one of a party of fourteen, among whom were two Franciscan friars of Lombardy. The whole party were shriven and houseld, marked with the sign of the Holy Cross, but only nine returned.

* See a parallel account in the Benedictine "Roger of Wendover."

In a tone of devout piety the traveller proceeds to tell us how he viewed a multitude of dead bodies lying in the Vale, as if there had been a great battle ; yet the bodies appeared to be whole and incorrupt. Many more illustrations might be given from this work of the utter inability of men in general to observe and report either on physical or political geography, or of the inability of listeners to credit them, had they ventured too far on the path of common sense.

With Maundeville may be contrasted the travels ascribed to a Franciscan friar, and dated in the same age. It is to be found in Hearne's collections. In vain does the reader expect a reflection of the state of the Mediterranean and of the East from this foolish treatise. There is an absurd scene in which the friar and his companions preach their dogma with insolence and reproaches to a crowd of Moslems, who appear to have treated these preachers with more civility than they deserved. The friar obliges us with garbled extracts from the Koran, ending each paragraph with the sentence, "*Thus saith Mohammed, the pig and the lover of women.*" It is pleasing to look forward to the time of Pococke, that gentle and open-minded scholar, who lived among the Mohammedans and was beloved as a brother. But if not in his time, certainly at no previous epoch, could any Western scholar have been permitted to ascertain and to teach the true historical geography of the East, which to this day remains unknown in our schools.

I have already cited the saying of the Benedictines that Geography is the other eye of History. Clearly without a real geography, a real history is impossible. Personality becomes indistinct at a distance, and dates of time may be uncertain. But

The Fran-
ciscan Boleter,
or William
of Worcester,
1322.

Monastic
geography.

places remain, the earth is firm, and whoso proves himself incapable of seeing and describing the earth on which he dwells, is disqualified for the task of writing History. I propose to offer a few remarkable illustrations of the monastic geography; from which it will appear that the monks formed a Theological Geography which concealed the earth from their disciples, and actually excluded the possibility of genuine knowledge wherever it was taught.

There is a coloured map which came into the possession of Sir Robert Cotton, and is to be seen in his library in the British Museum. I should remind the reader that Cotton was a mere collector of no critical ability. Neither he nor John Selden, who was in a limited sense a critic, ever thought of inquiring into the authenticity of the mass of the MSS. offered to them. They had the antiquary's passion, and they were constantly imposed upon by mock antiquities, the stock-in-trade of many an author and a bookseller in those times. The map in question, for example, has been assigned to the tenth century, which is an impossibility. It may have been contrived during the Revival of Learning; but in fact we know nothing of its history before it came into the hands of Cotton.

The earth is conceived as nearly quadrangular in shape. The spectator is supposed to be standing at the western limit, where the Pillars of Hercules are marked as a pair of gigantic objects. Our island is divided into districts named Canri, Britannia, Marinpergis, Lundonia, Wintonia, Cantia. The Land's End projects nearly as far west as Hibernia. North of Hibernia lies another large island, marked Tyleri. More than twenty islands lie to the north of Scotland.

Instead of France we find Sud Brytias on the map ; westward of this land on the other side of a mountain-chain lie Brigantia and Hispania Anterior. To the south of Sud Brytias the Alps are marked, and in the Lombardy plain, Verona ; south of the Apennines are marked, without names, two large cities, presumably Rome and Naples.

The Mediterranean is conceived as a vast estuary, crowded with islands, large and small. One of these, a huge star-shaped land (Sicily), lies a little to the east of the Pillars of Hercules. Africa is represented as but a shallow tract of land ; in the south there is a huge river, to the south of which again are marked the monsters, Cunocephales.

The geographer places Island (Iceland) in the north of Europe. The mainland opposite is distributed between Scithia, Balgaru, Deira ubi et Gothea, Sleone, Nerona, Reori. South of these parts occurs a great blank ; then come Tracia, the Huns, Pannonia, Dalmatia, Histica.

The gate of Constantinople is marked with fair accuracy, and very far to the south of it flows the Danube. Athens is marked ; far to the west of it Attica, and Macedonia to the south of Attica. Opposite Attica to the east lies the mainland Troia ; and north of Troia, Ephesus, Asia Minor, Cilicia, and Tharso Cilicia. North of the Black Sea are marked Mæotides Paludes. In the extreme north, to the west of the Caspian, which is figured as an estuary, lie the Griphi, the Turks, Gog and Magog, and Swane, and then the Colchians and Albanians.

The Armenian mountains are marked, and upon them the monk sees resting the huge Ark of Noe.

Ark of Noe,
the Ideal
Israel.

An immense tract of land is occupied by the tribes of Israel, from Zabulon, near Cilien, on the north, to Alexandria on the south, and from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates. This part of the map is perhaps the most instructive; for it shows how occupation with the Bible and with an imaginary history of the Jews had fixed in men's minds an utterly absurd geography. Hierusalem and Bethlaem are marked as cities; Hiericho as a district adjacent to Asser.

Babilonia is marked between the two great rivers; and beyond, in the far East, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, Amonia, Egiptus Superior; still further east, Aracasin, Siria, Pisidia, Mount Sina, Arabin, Arabia Deserta, Media, India. In the north-east corner of the map Boreas is marked; the figure of a lion is drawn, and the statement is made, *Hic abundant leones*.

More than half the whole area of the world is in the map assigned to the Orient, eastward of Constantinople and of Alexandria. Such was the system of the mediæval map-makers. Asia must equal in area Europe and Africa.

The Hereford Map of the World—a facsimile of which stands in the King's Library of the British Museum—bears the name of Richard The Hereford Wheel Map of the World. de Haldingham, prebendary of Hereford, and is said to have been drawn about the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century. It may be remarked that Boston of Bury, though he names Hereford Cathedral among his literary centres, says nothing of Haldingham. The date of the map is uncertain; but probably enough it represents the state of geographical knowledge, or rather fancy, during the fifteenth century. The map illustrates the monkish habit of surveying the world through a poetical and

theological medium. He finds, or believes himself to find, a geographical theory in the Bible, which he then proceeds, without examination of the facts, to embody in a map.

He finds Jerusalem described as set in the midst of the nations as the navel of the earth.* Whether the Hebrew poets were thinking of a city or merely of a community when they so sing of "Jerusalem," he does not pause to inquire. It is a fixed idea with him that the Holy Place must be the centre of a circle. He draws the earth, therefore, as a circle, and plants Jerusalem in the centre. It is orthodox Benedictine geography, sanctioned by the writers who assume the names of "St. Isidore and Rabanus Maurus." † Theory requires that Asia shall comprise one half of the world, because it is the inheritance of Shem, the first-born of Noe. Europe and Africa must be regarded as separate continents, on the ground that Ham and Japhet had the separate dominions. ‡

It is perhaps only in our day that the notion of an actual Paradise, the abode of our first parents, somewhere in the Orient is beginning to die out. In the fifteenth century it was a necessity of thought, and it probably occurred to none to doubt its existence, unless it were men who had travelled to the East, not leaving their common sense behind them. The Pseudo-Isidore says that Paradise is surrounded on all sides by a wall of fire, so that the flame all but reaches to heaven, and Gervase of Tilbury echoes the statement. The fiery wall is depicted on the Hereford map. So deeply this notion of a material Paradise

* Ezek. v. 5, xxxviii. 12; Ps. lxxiv. 12.

† Isid., "Orig.," xiv. 2 and 3; Rabanus Maurus, "De Univ.," xii. 4.

‡ Gervase of Tilbury, "Otia Imp.," ii. 2.

with river founts—in the ignorance of the poetical origin of the Arabian and Jewish legends—was (they say) impressed on the mind of Columbus, he thought the flood of the River Orinoco, in the Gulf of Paria, must be the Fount of Paradise.*

We find figured in this map, also as objects of sensuous perception, the Ark of Noah, the Tower of Babel, the Barns of Joseph. The Red Sea is painted vermilion, with the exception of the part intended to indicate the passage of the Israelites. Their wanderings are also shown. To the east of Jerusalem the Crucifixion is depicted, Bethlehem is marked by a cradle: details for which the monks never had any authority than the Old Testament, out of which they learned to construct the details of the Nativity and the Passion in the New.

The Church centres in the West which appear to be most attractive to the monkish imagination are the Temple of St. James at Compostella, and the see of St. Augustine at Hippo. In Numidia the saint himself is figured under a canopy. Hard by, Aquæ Tibilitanæ, mentioned in writings ascribed to the saint, is martyred.† It may with confidence be asserted that neither the saint nor his writings could have been heard of until late in the fifteenth century. It is in the "De Civitate Dei" ‡ that a passage occurs about monasteries which shows a similar state of the imagination to that revealed by the Hereford map.

Mediæval students had evidently that keen relish

* "Life," by W. Irving, Bk. X., cap. 4; Baring-Gould's "Curious Myths," pp. 250-266. I am indebted for these references to the Essay on Mediæval Geography in illustration of the Hereford Mappa Mundi, by the Rev. W. L. Bevan and the Rev. H. W. Phillott. 1873.

† "Ep.," 112; "C. D.," xxii. 8.

‡ "C. D.," xvi. 9.

for monstrosities which the vulgar still evince. A great number of them are figured on different parts of the map—objects, as repeated statements show, of the most undoubting faith. The mere sensation of wonder is coveted by all; and to poorly furnished minds it seems to supply the place of the nobler intellectual pleasures. But it would hardly be possible at the present day to amuse the most rustic audience with pictures or descriptions of men with eyes in the shoulders, or feet which serve as sunshades, of centaurs, mermaids, or the pelican which feeds her young with her own blood. The monks, however, made it their business to stimulate the appetite for marvels of all kinds, because their object was to produce the child-like, weak, and all-believing state of mind in their disciples. Nay, the mass of them, unreading, unthinking, immured in the cloister, and ignorant of the laws of the great world, can have been little better than overgrown children themselves. *Fingunt simul creduntque.*

The study of the Mediæval maps in the valuable collections of Jomard, Santarem, and others teaches many a lesson, and dispels many an illusion from the mind in respect to the Mediævalists. These men were never fit to write History in any worthy sense of the word. They who delight in causing their audience to gape and stare at the strange and marvellous are not the men to be eager for the facts, and to be zealous for accuracy in the relation of them. Men so absolutely possessed by a theory about a Book which they read in the Cell had no need, as they thought, to travel to distant countries that they might inspect their actual condition. In any monastery of the West the monks might sit down and draw such a map as that of Hereford, and some others which resemble it in the

general idea. He would pronounce his work to be true and correct, because it was based upon the Bible. He would never think of sending to inquire of the Arabian geographers, who began to busy themselves with the science in the thirteenth century. Yet it was then, and it is still, the Arabians who alone know the geography of Syria.

It is not the fact that the monks were praiseworthy seekers for geographical truth, whose blunders were those of an ignorant age. Geography as dogma. They deliberately set their faces against the truth in this as in other branches of science; and to this day many of their grave errors have remained uncorrected. Geography is no part of Theology, but they treated it as a deduction from Biblical sayings, and endeavoured to fix an opinion on Christians about the world, which was to be fixed and unalterable.

In the "Library" of Photius—a compilation of not earlier date than the fifteenth century—we find the bare designs of a Christian Christian Topography. Topography sketched out.* It has been executed by a monk of the Order of St. Basil, who writes under the high-sounding name of "Cosmas Indicopleustes," and who pretends that he lived—according to the usual device of his Order—about 1000 years before his actual time. In his Christian Topography he adopts a truly pious and theological tone and method. He has no notion of visiting places, and of describing them to his readers. No! Topography is a branch of Theology, and may be proved by demonstrations derived from the divine Scripture; nor may Christians hold such Topography in doubt.

Yet there are those who desire to be Christians,

* Cod. 36, on the "Book of Christians."

while they follow the doctrine of "them that are without." They think and opine that the The world not a sphere. heaven is spherical in shape. He proves both from the Old and New Testaments that this is not true, and consequently that he who holds to the opinion in question cannot be a Christian. He discusses at great length the Tabernacle which is an Image of the world; and proceeds to describe the greatness of the sun, the duration of the heavens, the course of the stars. Passages from the Greek Fathers in support of his propositions follow.

We then proceed to the description of the Indian animals. Indian animals: the Rhinoceros, the Taurelaphus, the Camelopard, and many others. The monk says of the Unicorn that he could not see a specimen of it, but he had seen four bronze statues of it in Ethiopia at the king's palace. It is a terrible beast, all its strength being in its horn. When pursued, it will cast itself headlong, turning so as to receive the whole impetus and thrust upon the horn, and so escape unhurt. It appears that the monk has had his fancy set on fire by the passages in the Psalms relating to the Unicorn, which he cites, xxi. 22; xxviii. 6 (Vulgate version).

In the map of the Cotton Library, above described, The Isle of Taprobane. a large island is figured on the extreme east called Taprobane.* Our monk favours us with a description of this island. The stone Hyacinthus is found there; and two kings bear rule, mutually hostile, one of whom holds the region of the Hyacinth, the other the remaining part of the island. There is a Church of Christ consisting of Persian immigrants to whom a priest, ordained in Persia, was sent, also a deacon. Our monk regards Sina, with the

* Milton names this isle, "P. R.," iv. 75.

author of the map, as a place on the adjacent mainland ; and fills nine paragraphs with nonsense about the island in the midst of India. In *Christian Topography* India is to be identified with the *Euilat* of the *Vulgate Bible* (*Gen. ii. 10, 12*).

It seems almost impossible to acquit the Christian topographer of wilful mendacity when he insists, in a separate book of his treatise, that many writers of "them that are without" have borne testimony to the antiquity of the *Divine Scriptures* by *Moses* and the *Prophets*. He culminates with the bold assertion that the *Greeks* seem to have learned *Letters* latest of all, and retain a more deeply rooted disbelief towards the *Scriptures*. We may understand what he means if we suppose that he writes in an *Italian cloister*—possibly at *Florence*—conscious of the *Revival of Greek Letters* and *Greek intelligence* in that city.

The figures attached to this work enable us to enter into the imaginations of the Christian topographer, and of the Confederacy to which he belongs. The monks thought of the earth as if it were a pavement, and shut in on every side by walls, which rose to an immense height, and then assumed the form of an arch or roof. Below the roof was placed the *Fir-^{Cosmo-}graph^{graphy.}*ment ; below which, again, the sun, moon, and stars were believed to move. A conical mountain of immense height rose in the northern part of the earth. When the sun, pursuing his circular course above the earth, was behind the mountain, night fell on the inhabitants of the world ; it became day when the sun shone on the opposite side of the mountain. So with the moon and the stars. The Christian topographer thinks of the earth and the heaven as oblong in figure, the length being double the breadth. The ocean surrounds the earth ;

beyond there is another earth, which touches the walls of heaven on all sides. He supposes that on the east side of this land beyond the sea man was created; there Paradise was situated. Expelled from Paradise, our first parents betook themselves to the adjoining coast by the sea; whence, at the time of the Deluge, Noe and his sons were borne in the Ark to this earth which we inhabit. The four rivers of Paradise pass by subterranean channels under the Ocean into this Earth, and burst forth at certain spots. It was this theory which accounts for the exclamation of Columbus at the sight of the mouth of the Orinoco.

About the same time that the work ascribed to Cosmas was known, the works ascribed to "Lactantius" and to "Augustine" also became known. These writers—in reality disguised Benedictines or Augustines—attempt to hold up the ancient philosophers to ridicule because they thought the earth was round, and that there were Antipodes.* "'Tis a fable, by no means worthy of belief," says the Augustinian. It followed, in the opinion of the sages of Salamanca, sitting in solemn council, that Columbus' idea of circumnavigating the world was not only profane, but absurd. Nor, in truth, can it be denied that the discovery of America, the very existence of the great continents of the West, with their great republics, are theoretical absurdities in the orthodox opinion, equally with the discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo.

If the existence of America be not an absurdity, but a fact of the highest interest, significance, and value, then it must be admitted that our Benedictine cosmographers and geographers did their best to hinder the existence of America. It ought never to have existed

* Lactant., "D. I.," iii. 24; Aug., "C. D.," xvi. 9.

at all, because it exists to put an end to a theory. It soon became certain that the earth was round, that there were Antipodes; and that the statement "Jerusalem is the navel of the earth" was devoid of meaning. The truth was won, in spite of the monks, by men who were led by a divine inspiration which the monks never knew—men who were haunted by the truth, and were loyal to the instincts which led them in its direction.

The English clergymen, to whom we are indebted for the careful description of the Hereford Map, remark with emphasis on the evil effects of the geographical dogma of the Greek and Latin monks:—

Evil effects
of geo-
graphical
dogma.

"Geography was henceforth forced into the mould of a pseudo-orthodoxy; and the language of the Bible, as interpreted by the Fathers, became the test of truth in regard to cosmology: scientific processes were discouraged, and all zest for discovery was quenched by the announcement that there was little or nothing to discover: in short, the ecclesiastical view impressed the stamp of *finality* on geographical science, and both writers and map-makers fell into a narrow groove, to which they adhered until they were forced out of it by the grand discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. . . . The specific fault in the Mediæval map was that it made Jerusalem the centre of the *habitable world*, that it consequently fixed the form and the limits of that world, and that it forced lands and seas into spaces that were not adapted to their true form or size. The use of parallels and meridians was absolutely incompatible with such a system of map-drawing. Hence the distortion of outlines and the gross displacement of towns and countries. The radical defect in the method vitiated the whole treatment of the subject. . . . A Mediæval *mappa mundi* must to a great extent be regarded as an *illustrated romance*."*

These words strike closer to the mark than perhaps the authors themselves intended. Jerusalem, whether on a map or in a legend, becomes the

The ideal
Jerusalem.

* Bevan and Phillott, "*Mediæv. Geog.*," xii. xxi.

centre of Church romance. No such place was known before the old Roman times. In the reign of Hadrian there was a strong place in Syria known after the Emperor Hadrian as *Ælia Capitolina*. Not a coin, not a line of genuine Hebrew inscription on stone or parchment has ever been discovered to bear witness to the occupation of the place by a warlike people of Hebrews or Judæi. The Children of Israel—*i.e.* the Muslim—conquered the land of Syria and the city of *Ælia*; and they, with slight interruption, have been its masters ever since. They call the city the Holy Place or the Holy House; and their right to do so has never been successfully challenged. The legends of the Muslim concerning the Holy Place are to be found in the Koran and in the great Chronicle of Tabari. They are ignorant of any Jewish occupation.

It is not the least probable that the name "Jerusalem" was applied to the Holy Place of the Muslim in Syria until some time in the fifteenth century. It is not the Jews nor the Rabbins who are responsible for that application. The Biblical and the Talmudical writers mean by "Jerusalem" an ideal city wherein the tribes are supposed to gather. In a secondary sense the term may denote any Jewry in Spain, in South Italy, in Holland or France.* The passionate love and pride expressed towards "Zion" and "Jerusalem" have certainly never been generally felt towards the city in Syria, nor indeed toward any city of whose inhabitants the majority are not of Jewish blood. About the beginning of the thirteenth century it seems that the excitement about Syria spread among the Rabbins, and we hear of a number of them following the fashion of pilgrimages. But if the words *ubi bene ibi patria* hold good for the Jew, it is not in

* D. W. Marks, "Notre Zion c'est la France."

Syria that he has ever found his most beloved Jerusalem, or Ariel.

It remains to trace the designation of the Holy Place of the Muslim in Syria as Jerusalem to the primitive Christians—that is, to the Benedictines with their Greek allies, and to them alone. It is clear that they, employing their usual artifice in the interpretation of the Psalms and Prophets, have converted the Jerusalem of poetry into the Jerusalem the centre of a geographical system. They have then—in pursuance of the same method—fixed the theory that the word of the Lord must go forth, the Church must take her rise, from that place. The Church is impersonated in her ideal Founder; and all the events from the Nativity at Bethlehem to the Passion at Golgotha have been arranged in accordance with the same system of Biblical *à priori*, of prophetic types and mystical adumbrations.

Jerusalem
localized by
the monks.

On the whole, there can be no better way in which to enter upon the study of Church history than by the examination of the Hereford Map. It yields an insight not merely into the habits of imagination of our English monks, but of the whole ambitious Order to which they belonged. Their eye falls with interest upon Jerusalem because the place is symbolic of the dogma by which they rule, but still more upon Rome, which is described as “Head of the world,” and as holding the reins of the terrestrial orb. But the map is a geographical and historical invention; and little gratitude do we owe our first teachers at the close of a long night of ignorance who offered us stones instead of bread, and barren, blighting theories of the world instead of the facts which kindle imagination and inspire for useful exertion.

In connection with the *Mappa Mundi* of Hereford may be perused the first book of the Poly-chronicon, ascribed to Ralph Higden, a Benedictine of St. Werburgh's, Chester, which sprang from the school of Bec. As usual, nothing is known of the personality of the monk, who is said to have lived into the late fourteenth century. The "Chronicon" was used in England soon after Caxton.

The work shows the usual system of *à priori* construction. It is planned in seven books because of the seven days of Creation; and has been written on the Benedictine scheme of history as laid down in the works ascribed to the Eusebii, Isidore, Augustine, and the rest. He has a better library at his command than had Boston of Bury St. Edmunds, who was ignorant of Higden's work.

Our monk follows the noted passage in the Pseudo-Augustine "Civ. Dei," xvi. 8. With the members of his confederacy he assumes that Asia forms half the world. The ocean encircles the mass of earth. The Red Sea and the Caspian Sea are byways to the ocean, which is 370 miles from the Euxine. The Firth of Gades or of Atlas is the third great bay of ocean.

Paradise is in the extreme east, and, as usual, surrounded by the fiery wall, whose flames reach to heaven.

There are monstrous trees and men in India. There are satyrs and pygmies a cubit high, who generate in the fourth year of their age, and in the fifth turn white. They collect in a body, and sitting on rams, make war against the cranes, and break their nests and eggs. There are gymnosophists who keep their undazzled gaze on the sun throughout the day. The dog-headed and other quaint beings are also to be found yonder. Ophir is an isle of India with abundance of gold.

The Chester monk has a chapter on the region of Judæa, in which he coincides with a perfect chorus of his Order who have discovered this imaginary land in Syria, and have inserted the fable of its having been made tributary by Pompey the Great into the Latin literature. He, too, distinguishes a celestial and a terrestrial Jerusalem. The city is corruptly called by the poets Solima, which name the Benedictines have inserted into many Latin poets. He repeats the fables about the Dead Sea.

But the illustrations need not be pursued. The monk is simply one of the many mouthpieces of the orthodox Benedictine dogma of geography. It provokes a smile when we find some English scholars denouncing with heat this monk as a wicked plagiarist, a villainous forger, who had vamped the Chronicle of his brother Benedictine of Chester, Roger. There is no question of plagiarism where there is no question of originality. They are all obsequious to the geographical form of the dogma, as to every other form, theological, historical, physiological, astronomical. And we may shrewdly suspect that the dogma of geography was laid down about the time when the abbots of the Southern province were compelled, by the growing curiosity of the age, to bestir themselves for the education of their young alumni at Oxford and Cambridge. But let us correct this dogma by reference to the Arabian, Edrisi.

We are forced to pause before using the work ascribed to Edrisi as evidence, in order to inquire its probable date. It cannot have been com-
Geography of Edrisi.
 piled in the twelfth century, as the eloquent and somewhat florid Oriental language of the preface intimates. The principal MS. in the Royal Library of Paris is dated 1344, a statement equally untrustworthy. The ideas, however, of this geography may be fairly considered as

those of the travelled and instructed Moslems who visited the West during the Middle Ages.

This Edrisi may have read some Christian books, or may have listened to some oral Christian traditions. He is a witness to the fact that his people have ever recognized the famed city of Syria which the Benedictines make the centre of the circle of the earth. Its proper name is El Mocaddas, the Holy Place or Sanctuary in the Mohammedan tradition. But Edrisi writes at a time when, owing to the influx of Christian pilgrims into Syria, his belief has been partly confused by listening to the tales.*

The two principal cities of Palestine are Ramleh and Beit-el-Mocaddas (the Holy House). The latter is an illustrious town, ancient and full of ancient monuments. It once bore the name of Ilia (*Ælia Capitolina*). Situated on a mountain, of easy access on all sides, it stretches from west to east. At the west is the gate called of El-Mihrab. Below is the Cupola of David (on whom be blessing!); on the east, the gate called of Pity, which is usually shut, and only opened on the feast of branches; on the south, the Gate of Seihun (Sion); on the north, the Gate of Amoud-el-Ghorab. Starting from the western gate of El-Mihrab, you pass towards the east by a broad street, and you come to a church of the Resurrection—so called by the Muslim called Comamé. This church is the object of pilgrimage to the Nazarenes from all lands of the East and West. You enter by the western gate and pass under the dome which covers the whole enclosure, and which is one of the most remarkable things in the world. The church is below this gate, and it is not

* "Géographie d'Edrisi traduite de l'Arabe en Français," par P. Amédée Jaubert, 1836, l. 339, *seqq.*

possible to descend into the lower part of the building by this side. You go down on the northern side by a gate opening on a staircase of thirty steps. The gate is called Bab Santa Maria. On entering the church the spectator finds the Holy Sepulchre, a considerable building with two doors, and surmounted by a cupola of very solid construction, very strong, and made with admirable art. One of the two gates faces, on the north, the Gate of Santa Maria; the other faces the south, and is called Bab-el-Saloubié, Gate of the Crucifixion, on this side of the peristyle of the church, opposite which, toward the east, is a considerable church, where the Nazarenes celebrate their holy offices and make their prayers and oblations.

On the east of the church you arrive by a gentle decline at the prison where the Lord Messias was detained, and at the place where He was crucified. The great cupola is circularly pierced to the open sky, and you see there all around and inside paintings representing the prophets, the Lord Messias, Saint Mary his mother, and Saint John Baptist. If you go from the principal church towards the east, you will find the holy dwelling built by Solomon, son of David, and which was a place of pilgrimage from the time of the power of the Jews. The temple was taken from them, and they were driven out when the Muslim arrived.* Under the Muslim domination it was enlarged, and it is the great Mosque known by the Muslim under the name of Mesdjid el-Acsa. Its equal does not exist, always excepting the great Mosque of Cordova in Andalus.

The author, in a further description, says that on the south was a chapel which had been used by the

* There is naught of this in Tabari's "Chron."

Muslim, but the Nazarenes had taken possession of it by force, and had converted it into a Convent of Templars; that is, Servants of the House of God. He shows in several places that he has confused the traditions of the monks with those of the Koran, in so far, that is, as to suppose the canonical Christian legends to be told of the Lord Messias of the Arabian tradition. He mentions a church of St. Mary and the tomb of the Virgin in sight of the Mount of Olives, the church of Our Father, the tomb of Lazarus, who was raised by the Lord Messias; and, two miles from the Mount of Olives, the village whence the she-ass was brought which the Lord Messias rode on his entry into Aurashlim.*

He speaks of a church near the Jordan under the protection of St. John, served by Greek monks. On the south of Jerusalem as you go out by the Gate of Seihun you come to a fine church wherein is the hall in which the Lord Messias ate with his disciples, with the table still extant, and which is visited on Thursdays. Below is the Valley of Hell and the Church of St. Peter. Here is the source of Selwan (Siloe), where the Lord Messias gave sight to a blind man who before had never rejoiced in the light of day. South of the spring is the field which was bought by the Messias for the burial of strangers. At Bethlehem he describes the church, the grotto where the Messias was born, and the cradle in which he was placed. Eight miles south of Bethlehem is the Mosque of Ibrahim, where repose the remains of Ibrahim, Isaac, and Yakoub, with their wives. At Nablous he mentions the well dug by the patriarch Yakoub (on whom be peace!), near which the Lord

* Here the author is following a Christian writer or preacher, and corrupts the word "Jerusalem."

Messias sat and asked water of the Samaritan woman. But the most important church next to that at El-Mocaddas is that of Sant Jacoub or St. James of Compostella.* Other indications fairly agree with the hypothesis that the Arabian lived not far from the time of Chaucer.

He appears to have learned English names from the Norman French; some are scarcely decipherable. Dartmouth, however—notable in Chaucer—appears as Djartmouda, Dover and London as Dobres and Londres. But what are Ghounester and Gharcafort? † Of interest, also, are the views of the Arabian geographer of Christian centres in the West. He sees at Rome the Palace of the Prince, called the Pope, who is mightier than all the princes of the earth. He refers to the three Metropolitan sees, Antioch, Alexandria, and El-Mocaddas. The latter, he says, is the most recent. It did not exist from the time of the Apostles, which seems to be a clear indication that the Arabian was aware of the absence of all Christian antiquities at his Holy Place. He adds that it was instituted for the glorification of the Holy House; again, an indication that the Muslim regarded the Christians as holding a junior branch of their own sacred tradition. He says there is a church in Rome modelled after the temple of Jerusalem, that there is another of St. Peter and Paul, and that there are 200 churches in Rome. ‡

It may be well to offer some further illustrations from monastic writings of the influence of Theological Dogma upon man's views of the natural world. Here again it prepossesses the mind, dulls the faculty of observation, and leads the student into insuperable difficulties and inconsistencies.

* Edrisi, II. 227.

† II. 374.

‡ II. 250-252.

There are three great variants of the great human tradition of the Deluge with which we Europeans are concerned—the Greek, the Arabian, and the Hebrew; all of them full of interest to the student of the aitiologic vein of human fancy, by which it travels from effects to causes.

But the monks fastened upon the Hebrew tradition as if it were sole and authoritative, and endeavoured to fuse the facts of the Natural world into harmony with it. They met inevitable difficulties, not by inquiring into the authors and sources of the literary tradition, not by study of aitiology, but by violent attempts to deny the truth that Nature herself offers everywhere to the most careless spectator. The fruits of travelled observation and experience must be sacrificed on the shrine of that idol which they called Incommutable Truth, but which in reality was nothing but ecclesiastical vision and dream.

The question, *e.g.*, arose, If all animals not found in the Ark at the time of the Flood were destroyed, how came there to be animals in the islands? Frogs, indeed, spring out of the earth by spontaneous generations, but wolves and other beasts are known to be propagated by the union of the sexes. How did they come to the islands? The parents must have swam to the nearest islands from the Ark; but it was impossible that islands, remote from the continents, could thus be reached. Men may have carried them thither in the interests of sport, or they may have been transferred thither by the command or permission of God and by the agency of Angels. Or they may have sprung up from the earth according to the first Origin, when God said, *Let the earth bring forth the living soul.* If so, it becomes clear that the reason why

all kinds were brought into the Ark was not that animal life must be renewed, but for the sake of a Church mystery ; that is, for the sake of setting forth in type and figure the various nations of the earth. So the monk retires from the ground of fact and proof into the region of dream and mystic.

Again. The Monk wishes to reconcile the undoubted fact, as he regards it, that there are monstrous races of human beings in the earth with the legend of the Flood. His notion of history is so lax that he believes history vouches for the existence of such monsters. Some races have but one eye in the middle of the forehead, like Polyphemus, others have their feet turned behind their legs. Others have the nature of both sexes, the right breast being virile, and the left muliebre ; the functions of generation are alternate. Some have no mouths and breathe by the nostrils. There are pygmæi of a cubit in stature. There are races where females are mothers at five, and die at eight years of age. There is a race of one-legged men, who bend not the knee, and are of wonderful swiftness. There is the race of the shadow-footed, who lie on their backs on the earth in the summer and protect themselves from the sun by the shadow of their feet. There are neckless men, with eyes in the shoulders. He has seen mosaics representing other human curiosities from the shores of Carthage. There is the dog-headed race, who bark like beasts.

Belief in
monstrous
races of
men.

We are studying the impressions of a time when travel is becoming a fashion, when a restless curiosity about the great world disturbs men's minds, when shipmen returning home to Dartmouth or Hull will disappoint their open-mouthed audience, unless they can glut their appetite for marvels and monsters. The

monk has no interest in sifting such stories. It makes for the general course of credulity that those things should be accepted. He is concerned only to bring these tales within the rim of his Biblical system. It is not necessary, he says, that we should believe in all the races of men that we hear of. But no faithful man will doubt that all human beings, all rational mortal animals, however strange in form or colour and other attributes, claim their origin from the one great Protoplast, Adam.

God is the Creator of all, and His universe is fair, though the parts may to us appear deform; for we know not their relations and their congruences. We know that there are men with more than five digits on hands and feet; but we must not suppose that the Creator erred, and knew not why he made men thus.

Perhaps God created some races of monsters with a view to convince us that his wisdom did not err, that he was not an imperfect workman when he suffered the monstrosities in particular cases which are known to us all, to come into being.

It should not seem absurd to us that, as there are individual monsters to be found in every people, so there are monstrous peoples excepted from the whole human race. At all events, we may draw the cautious conclusion that the tales of monstrous races are null and void; or, if they exist, they are not men; or they spring from Adam if they are men. So the theory of the primæval Protoplast and the descent of all men from him through the sons of Noe, is saved.

Such was the stupor of men who had been trained to wonder and believe as the first article of wisdom and first principle of education, in presence of the great

world. A marvellous Book is the mirror of a marvellous world. An incredible Oriental legend finds confirmation or it finds opposition in travellers' tales of incredible ethnology. Men found refuge from the oppression of one belief in submitting to another equally oppressive, or in forced efforts at reconciliation. We see the taste for belief in "men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders," and other monstrosities surviving in Shakespeare's days, nay, down to our own. There have been men of high accomplishment, but weak in reason, of our own time, who would gladly have welcomed any fresh evidence substantiating the existence of pygmies. But one cannot but admire that inborn spirited energy of Nature which we call Reason or Genius, which, operating in chosen minds, has gradually emancipated the world from the dominion of the low appetite for wonder and the habit of believing tales because they are told.*

The accusation against the clergy is not that they created the idle appetite for wonder, but that as teachers they took no pains to correct it; they stimulated the appetite in the interests of Church rule. There is a strong and wide-opened disposition among the European peasantry to believe, for example, in men with tails. So obstinately rooted is this belief in Greece and Albania that students have even consulted medical evidence to satisfy themselves upon the question. Now, in the seventeenth century the French bishop, Simon Mayole, wrote to the effect that in England there were families with tails, a penal infliction upon ancestors who derided an Augustinian sent by St. Gregory to preach in Dorset. They sewed

Stimulation
of the
appetite for
wonder.

* See the Augustinian "De Civ. Dei," xvi. 7, 8, of *ad Fratres in Eremo*, ser. 37, where he asserts that in Ethiopia he saw a one-eyed nation.

the tails of different animals to his clothes ; but it was soon found that these tails were entailed on them and their posterity for ever.*

The phantasy, acting under the conditions of ignorance, remoteness from the object of rumour, and intense curiosity, will of itself generate unreal forms, in which something is added to, or withdrawn from, the materials of experience. But the monks are equally unable to present the near object in the forms of matter of fact. The MS. cited by Mr. Sharon Turner, in his "History of the Anglo-Saxons," shows, with other sources, that the monkish writer conceived the Red Sea as actually red. Near it were red hens, the touch of which caused burning to the hands and body. Pepper is black, because fire is used to drive away the serpents which guard it. He has the usual array of dog-headed, boar-tusked, horse-maned, flame-breathing men. There are ants as big as dogs, with feet like grasshoppers, red and black. They dig gold for fifteen days. Men go to fetch it with female camels and their young. The ants surrender the gold in exchange for the young camels, which they devour. Ignorance might excuse these representations, but the monk should have known Gaul more exactly. Yet in Gaul he says there are men twenty feet high, with heads like lions, and mouths as the sails of windmills.

So also it is not merely the Near in space, but the Near in time as well as the Remote which was filled with Monstrous animals and men by our early historiographers. They must discharge the function with which their minds are overloaded into all their retrospective views. The time before King Arthur may be

* Goldsmith, "Citizen of the World," xvi. Mr. Baring-Gould witnesses in the "Red Spider" to the tenacity of the idea in Devon.

somewhat more miraculous than the time after King Arthur ; but the stream of events continues in the same channel of Biblical and old Roman deduction from first to last. England was filled with giants till the coming of Brutus. A rain of blood during three days marked the reign of one of his successors. Another engaged in single combat with a monster from the Irish sea, which devoured him like a fish.* Arthur engages two giants in single combat, and slays them. One was the giant of Mont St. Michel, a cannibal, who swallowed his victims half alive. The other clothed himself in a robe made of the beards of slain kings.

It is but a step from these monsters to the tyrants of whom Britain and other lands were once fertile, men of diabolical parentage and spirit, who by mere force of logic are filled with the most unreasoning hatred and cruelty toward all children of Holy Church. This habit of painting human beings as devils under the influence of Church partisanship passed over into the political sphere. History written in the Lancastrian interest was thus to furnish us with the portrait of a Richard III. born into the world with claws upon his fingers.

Often in perusing this fantastic lore we are reminded of the passage in which Milton describes the nature of the dream-life of the mind. Reason, he sings, is chief over the faculties of the soul, among which fancy holds the next place.

“ Of all external things,
Which the fine watchful senses represent,
She forms imaginations, æry shapes,
Which Reason, joining or disjoining, frames
All what we affirm or what deny, and call
Our knowledge or opinion ; then retires

* Galfredi, “ Hist. Brit.,” p. 51.

Into her private cell when Nature rests.
 Oft in her absence mimic Fancy wakes
 To imitate her ; but misjoining shapes,
 Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams." *

By the system of monastic education the memory was overcharged with prodigious ideas, the fancy suffered from hypertrophy, the judgment was kept in a state of imbecility ; and men wandered through the world without relish for the matter of fact, unless it could be deduced from matter of fancy, ignorant alike of themselves and of the world in which they lived.

The consideration of this part of the subject would not be complete if we failed to remember that the teachers who impressed these fantasies about Nature on the minds of the ignorant represented themselves as having supernatural dominion over its wild forces. They revert, as usual, to the Scriptures of the Hebrews and to their own canonical writings for the authority of these representations. Because a Hebrew poet sings of the desert becoming a delight, the solitudes as a Garden of the Lord, they pretend that Gaul and Britain, covered with savage forests and haunted by wild beasts, had by their coming been converted into a smiling Paradise. Because the Jewish patriarchs had once dwelt in tents, so must the pioneers of Monachism have tenanted cabins in solitary exile, and have sung psalms in oratories of wicker, while the howling wolf gave the responses.

In these retreats they had exerted their power over the wild creatures—the elan, the buffalo, the bison, the urus and the bear, and over the not less fierce hunter and bandit. Such tales † are told of a St. Calais or

* "Paradise Lost," bk. v.

† "Orderic Vital," iii. 182, ed. Leprevost.

St. Karilef in the Merovingian time. St. Giles, of widespread fame, whose name points back to Greek influence in the cloisters (*Ægidius*), had grown old in the forests of the Rhone, nourished on the milk of a fawn in a cave. A king in the course of the chase had pursued the fawn, and the arrow which was aimed at her heart pierced the hand of the solitary. The compunctious king insisted on replacing the grotto by a monastery, of which St. Giles duly became the abbot. So was the Abbey and the town of St. Giles furnished with an appropriate myth of origin, and at the same time the great truth was inculcated that the very beasts of the field were at peace with the men of God; and that earthly possessions were rightly bestowed on those who could produce such divine titles to enjoy.

So the real Breton Abbey of Nermok traces its origin to the romantic time when a prince pursuing a stag found it in church at the feet of the young abbess. At the end of seven days he placed on the altar an Act conveying lands with several hundred herds of horses and cattle to the congregation. Similar was the behaviour of King Clotaire the Second towards the Irish monk Deicole in Segraine, whose lonely altar had sheltered a wild boar. So for many ages the Cross of St. Basle in the forest of Rheims was a refuge for game, respected alike by the hounds and their masters when in full chase. Moreover, the doe fleeing from the wolves, presented an apt allegory of the Christian soul pursued by the devil and his hosts, as in the legend of St. Lanmer.

The monks having recovered the primæval innocence of our first parents, and leading the life of angels, had likewise recovered Adam's lost ascendancy over the lower creation. The English Benedictine who writes

the life of St. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne argues that it is matter of course and not of surprise that he who serves the Creator faithfully should command the service of all creatures. The promise of the Book of Job (v. 23) was meant to be made good, and it was made good in the experience of this new *élite* of humanity. Not less was the canonical promise to the disciples, "Greater works shall the believer do," intended to be made good; and the reader must confess that the miracles of St. Cuthbert are more astounding both in quantity and in quality than those of the Apostles. He charms a spring out of the dry ground; he raises a crop of barley from seed sown after the proper time. The man of God "laughs at impossibilities, and says the thing is done."

The ecclesiastical interest is apparent in all this violent contempt for the plainest truths which are impressed upon human experience. One of our earliest Tudor chroniclers tells in English, after the Benedictines, how St. Germain came into England to reform "King Vortigern" from the Arian heresy. It was a snowy evening, passing cold. He was denied lodgings with the king, and took refuge with the king's herdsman, whose wife killed the fatted calf for the bishop's supper. The holy man bade her gather the bones, and wrap them in the skin, and place them in the stall. The calf was shortly restored to life, and ate hay. On the morrow the bishop repaired to the king, denounced his want of hospitality, bade him and his depart from the palace, resigning it to the herdsman, from whom all the subsequent British kings descended.

About the same time the monks were writing their stories about "St. Anselm." He put out fires, calmed tempests, healed diseases. He produced a spring at

the top of a hill by prayer. A leaky ship leaked not while he was on board. A Flemish nobleman was cured of leprosy by drinking of the water wherein the saint had washed his hands, and soldiers cured of ague by eating of crumbs from his loaf. After his death, his girdle was applied to women in child-birth. So "John of Salisbury." Thus the canonical word was fulfilled that the apostolic men should work greater works than their Master; and it is a most uncanonical and fallacious proceeding on the part of the modern historian to remove the envelope of wonder from these Figures who are adapted to wondrous landscapes and climates.

It is the same class of writers who, under the names of St. Athanasius and St. Jerome, carry us into the Thebaid and to Syria, and who tell us of Abbot Gerasimus and his grateful lion whose foot he had relieved of a thorn, which fed on milk and cooked vegetables, daily fetched water from the Jordan, and died in grief on his master's tomb. It is a French monk who writes under the notorious pseudonym of Sulpicius Severus, garbler of Roman history, who tells us of the lion and the she-wolf who ate of vegetable food at the hands of the men of God as if they had been by nature herbivorous. And why not, since the Hebrew prophet had sung of carnivora eating straw like the ox?

The origin of the name of "Martin fishers" for certain birds is traced up to the art of St. Martin, who saw in these divers an image of the devil, and sent them away into the desert. St. Benet himself, at Subiaco, had his familiar crow which regularly attended on his meals. Sparrows followed the Abbé Maixent; rotelets laid their eggs and hatched them in the cloaks of monkish toilers in the vines. When St. Keivin, a

Breton monk, extended his hands in prayer, birds made a nest of them. When St. Magloire came into his endowment near the sea, all the birds of the woods and all the fishes of the deep came swarming towards his property. The noble donor, who had been cured of leprosy and had surrendered half his property, sought in dismay an exchange, but in vain. The birds and fishes again followed their true lord.

The monachic mythology affords abundant entertainment to the student of the human mind. We observe how the fancy, operating by the constant motive of desire and self-interest, will certainly produce the same forms of thought in endless iteration. We read in the old religious myths of Greece how Athamas, once tyrant of Bœotia, going into exile, inquired of the god where he should dwell. In the place where he should receive hospitality from wild beasts, was the response. He wandered far till he came upon wolves devouring the carcasses of sheep. When they beheld him they left their prey and fled. And there he built the place Athamantia. So were the sites of monasteries indicated by wild beasts. So the chased stag pointed out Fécamp, seat of St. Leger, the white eagle that of the Abbey of St. Thierry, or the dove that of Hautvilliers.

St. Corbinian of Freisingen, on his way to Rome, turns a bear, which had killed one of his litter horses, into a beast of burden, and the bear follows him like a broken horse. St. Malo is followed by a wolf as if he had been a domestic dog. St. Paul of Léon does what he will with buffaloes, bears, crocodiles, or sea-serpents, and causes the sea itself to retire four thousand paces from the monastery of his sister. The nuns place flints to mark its bounds, which are instantly magnified into lofty rocks. St. Hervé of Brittany had a wolf which

was stabled with the sheep, and did the work of an ox. The Irish monks performed similar feats with stags. Whitby and many another abbey can produce analogous legends.

This phænomenon—this enormous architectural system of interested fable—is part of the phænomenon of the Benedictine system. If, pacing thoughtfully the floor of one of our cathedrals, we call up to the imaginative ear this vast volume of fiction, gazing meantime at the painted windows, we begin to realize the insatiable ambition of the Order, its inveterate alliance with the spirit of falsehood, and the consequent profound depression of all active intelligence, which dared not exert itself in the cause of useful knowledge, which timidly retired into obscure places, followed by denunciations of wizardry, magic, and inspirations of the devil.

The monastic books called “Bestiaria,” with their curious designs, prove how completely the lust for sensation and fable had taken possession of the minds of our early teachers, and how zealously these new *Æsops* sought for analogies of the religious life, not in the real habits, but in the theoretic nature of animals. It is a Benedictine who writes, under the name of a Cardinal and a Saint P. Damiani, an opuscle on this subject, in which all the real and fabulous animals of the “Bestiaries” furnish in various ways examples of monastic virtues.

It may be thought that such matters are hardly worth serious criticism. Not so by those who wish to know the competence of the monk to tell us the truth about any matter of common human interest. Not so by those who hold that the educator should draw aside rather than thicken the veil which screens

the objects of Nature from our gaze. In reference to Church uses, the fables so massively told were highly profitable ; but in reference to all other uses pernicious. The people needed no stimulation to wonder about animals ; thousands of folk-tales show the contrary. They needed not the lesson of kindness to animals ; it is taught over again in the tales of the three grateful beasts who help the hero at the time of need. The monks dignify their fabulous natural history with the name of physiology ; but had their will prevailed, the foundation of that great branch of science would never have been laid. It may, perhaps, be maintained, without fear of contradiction, that the beasts of the field have never consented to Church dogma, nor evinced a distinct regard for the persons of monks over those of ordinary humanity.

The monk was incorrect in what he calls his animal tropology. He may indeed have been wise as a serpent, but the greed for spoil which constantly betrays itself in the legends of animals, the *dénouement* of which is a splendid Donation to a cloister, remind rather of the beak and talons of the hawk than of the harmlessness of the dove. The whole scientific theories of the orthodox monk are based upon the dogma that every law of Nature which we respect has in turn been set aside in the interest of his ecclesiastical corporation. With the denial of this, his theories fall to the ground.

I have dwelt at some length on these matters because I desired to point out the fallacy of our historians who have thought they must use the monkish stories as material for an objective knowledge of our past. The notion has obtained, that if you omit the prodigious and the impossible, the residuum may be accepted as record and registration. It is a vain

notion. If you deny the prodigious, you kill the root of the whole fabulous organism. Nothing is understood on this subject until it is perceived that the men of God have persuaded themselves that all space and time belongs to them, and that they are at liberty to occupy the whole field of human contemplation with unreal objects and events, which shall serve as symbolic of their own aspirations and ambitions.

LEGENDS OF THE DISCOVERY OF THE NEW ORB.

The year 1892 is the conventional 400th anniversary* of the discovery of America; but a critical inspection of the evidence brings to light the fact that we have no contemporary evidence whatever from the late fifteenth century in the Latin language to show that the East and West Indies had been discovered. There is evidently a knowledge of the East Indies in the Arabian tale "Sindbad," probably also in the Hebrew Bible; but the date of this literature has yet to be ascertained. The reader will find the materials for a reconsideration of the subject in the industrious compilation of Mr. Justin Winsor. It is the chronology of these legends which is fictitious, as also the personal details.

The plain matter of fact is this. True astronomical and cosmographical knowledge was gradually creeping into the world, partly from the studies of scholars, partly from the adventures and observations of illiterate seamen during the sixteenth century. The leaders of religious thought offered a stubborn resistance to the reports which came from either quarter, until it was no longer possible to deny what the world had accepted. It was the first great conflict of the Church with science,

* Written 1890—E. A. P.

and the Church was defeated. The Religious Orders then resolved to make the best of the situation. Since they could no longer deny the existence of the New Orb, they would Christianize it, they would go as far as possible in claiming the credit of the discovery. It was not until the later sixteenth century that they sat down to the task of composing plausible legends in the Portuguese, the Spanish, or Italian interest, in which members of great families, patrons of the religious houses, were represented, in the void of all authentic reports and memorials, as discoverers of the East and West Indies. In this way the ideals of Gama, of Columbus, of Amerigo Vespucci arose. It is another example of the necessity of looking closely to the alleged dates of the sixteenth-century literature, that a considerable number of the tracts in Mr. Harris's "Bibliography" have been antedated, as comparison shows. There is no publication relating to the discovery of the East or West Indies that bears the least resemblance to contemporary narrative. We have nothing but the usual smooth, plausible tales of origins. What Bacon says of the style of Osorio, the Portuguese bishop, so flatulent and empty, may be applied to all the rest.

Let me recall to the reader how Francis Bacon declares that it was only in the time of "our fathers" that lights were made in this great structure of the world. Let me point him to the History of Spain by Father Mariana, the Jesuit, a man of enlightened judgment, although he wrote under the restrictions of his profession and of the censorship. His life is said to have covered the important period 1537-1623; and his work, published late in the sixteenth century, shows how easy it was to tell, in the course of a few columns, the pith of the stories relating to early discoverers.

One of his sources was the false Epistles of "Peter Martyr Anghiera, of Milan," the flimsy structure of which has been torn to pieces by the ruthless hand of Hallam. But none of his other sources are of greater value. The clerical artist is everywhere apparent; the world is viewed through a clerical medium. The great ambition is to subjugate the new world to the Papal Empire, to baptize every new geographical discovery with the names of Christ, of Mary, and the saints.

The monks of St. Dié in the Vosges have the honour—apparently in league with their brethren of St. John Deo, Florence—of inventing the name "America," after a member of the Vespucci family. The tales edited by Richard Hakluyt need to be examined with the like severe circumspection. The commercial and patriotic interest has here also led, in conjunction with the clerical interest, to the concoction of a number of tales of English enterprise, which might partly serve to stimulate the men of the Elizabethan time to new exertions. We obtain, however, some glimpses of that sturdy, patient, enterprising character of Englishmen which began to be formed in the school of the sea, and which has been the source of so much of the national greatness.

It may seem strange that the discovery of the world as an orb made so little impression on the minds of intelligent men. One would have supposed that so soon as it became known that the facts within the ken and experience of many a plain illiterate sailor flatly contradicted the statements of our Christian cosmographers, and of the Bible on which they founded themselves, Church teaching must have been discredited and utterly overthrown. That it was not so is a proof partly of the enormous strength and influence

of the Church organization, partly of the extreme languor of intelligence which resulted from inveterate indulgence in falsehood.

It is perhaps only now that we are beginning to realize the immense significance of the rise of culture in America. When we cast a steady glance at all that has been accomplished in the West during the memory of men now living, we see a fulfilment of the saying concerning "nations born in a day;" and the absurdity comes home to us of continuing to found education upon a book in which the Almighty appears to ignore the nature of the earth He has made, and the coming into existence of so many millions of souls who cannot trace their parentage to Shem.

CHAPTER VIII.

FABLES OF THE SCHOOLS.

THE MONASTERY AT POGGIO AND THE FABLES OF EARLY IRISH CULTURE.

I WOULD now ask the reader to pay a visit to a literary monastery which was concerned in the construction of the mythology of culture in Ireland at an early and impossible date.

In a lonely gorge of the Apennines between Genoa and Milan, not far from the banks of famed Trebia, stood till 1803 the Benedictine abbey of St. Columban, Bobbio. Bobbio: the Legend of St. Columban. The old church was under the patronage of St. Peter: I ask the reader to make an effort of imagination, and to seat himself in the Scriptorium of that abbey at some time in the late fifteenth century, or in the following age, by the side of a monk who is tracing, according to the Rules of Benedictine art, the romance of the life of St. Columban. Bobbio was the child of Monte Cassino, and could have possessed no library, no staff of historical writers, until that age. The theme of the monk Jonas is the life of a new monastic legislator.

Jonas boldly imagines that the Scotti, or Irish, in their remoteness from other nations, were "the more flourishing in dogmatic vigour." He is bold, because he writes in obedience to a theory of Church history.

The theory was that Ireland must be brought into connection with the Italian and French cloisters; and the method must be that of Church romance. To the analyst, the clue lies in the names of the cloisters. Thus St. Patrick, a Gallo-Roman, is related to St. Martin of Tours, and had been sold to slavery by pirates in Ireland. He is restored to Gaul, and studies at Marmontier and Lerins. He goes, with St. Germain of Auxerre, to trample out the Pelagian heresy in Graub. He repairs to Rome, obtains a mission from the Pope, and goes back to Ireland with the rank of bishop. At his death he is regarded with the most passionate devotion, Ireland is converted, and is full of schools. Ossian, the Homer of Ireland, has been converted, and the monasteries have become the asylum of bards and of Celtic poetry. Every holy Roman defies tyrants and protects slaves, and St. Patrick forms no exception to the rule.

At Kildare, the Cell of the Oak, St. Bridget had wrought miracles, had driven out dæmons, and an inextinguishable fire had been kindled by holy women on her tomb. The fame of the Abbess of Kildare had spread to Cologne and to Seville, and her name had become the commonest baptismal name of Irish girls. Prodigious was the effect of the exertions of St. Patrick and St. Bridget. The young men and women were crazy to be monks and nuns. It has been seriously maintained that the Round Towers were the belfrys of cathedrals and abbeys erected before the English conquest.

Nor was the quality of the monks inferior to their quantity. French and Roman missionaries disembarked at Cork with copies of Ovid and Virgil in their robes. Greek was cultivated

Legend of the
conversion of
Ireland.
St. Patrick.

St. Bridget.

Fabulous
schools in
Ireland.

with passion ; and the devotees of the faith indulged in the greatest boldness of speculation. All this in the fifth and sixth century of the era, and before the monks themselves had begun to calculate the age of the Church from the Nativity. For we must wait for more than 500 years before an Irish Benedictine, Marianus, will provide us with a chronicle in which he will state for the first time correctly the number of solar years from the Incarnation.

All the romantic stories of Ireland were not heard of until some time in the fifteenth or sixteenth century. But now to return to our Jonas in Bobbio, whom the Benedictines in their biographic system make nearly a contemporary of St. Columban. It was so ordained that Columban should be born the very year that St. Benedict died ; and his life iterates the traits of his predecessor. He is tempted by the young Irish beauties of Leinster. He flees to holy Bangor, and finds protection under the pastoral staff of Abbot Congall. But the unresting Irish blood urges him across England and the sea to Gaul. He enchants King Gontram of Burgundy with his eloquence. He fixes his abode in the old Roman castle of Anegray, and works the usual spells by Scriptural means upon wild men and wild beasts. He removes to old Roman Luxeuil, at the foot of savage Vosges. He founds a third cloister at Fontaines.

St. Colum-
ban: a
parallel to
St. Benet.

It is conventional that the French and Burgundian nobles should bring their sins to him, and entreat him to shear off their noble locks, and convert them into monks. The *Laus Perennis* set in ; not an hour of night or day was silent from the sounds of Psalms on the slopes of Vosges and Jura. The monks rose to toil in the fields before they had finished their sleep, and

walked dormitant to their cells at night. So passed twenty years. But St. Columban stumbled on the stone of offence—the question of the observance of Easter on the fourteenth of the moon. He persisted in the Jewish practice, as he must do at his date, according to the system of ideas in which he figures.

Then he is persecuted, also conventionally, by King Thierry and Queen Brunehault on the question of royal marriage. He is carried to Besançon, but escapes and returns to Luxeuil. An armed force is sent for him; but, after canonical examples, the soldiers fall at his feet and beg his pardon. The scene, no doubt, has been constantly iterated, both in fact and in fiction; for the fact creates the ideal, the ideal in turn generates the fact. The saint goes into exile. At Autun, at Avallon, at Auxerre, and at Nevers you may still hear of his miracles *en route*; and at Orleans the legend of his entry into the house of a Syrian couple, and his cure of the blind husband, may still be recited. At Tours, the boat in which he sails miraculously arrests itself, and the saint prays at the tomb of St. Gregory. At Nantes he is released.

Then St. Columban finds shelter with the kings of Neustria and Austrasia. He becomes a missionary again. He goes up the Rhine to Bregenz; and along with his bold compatriot, St. Gall, makes spiritual war on the pagans, who offered boiling beer to Woden. The pair live like savages on the banks of the lake, and listen to dialogues of dæmons. Then St. Columban leaves the poor ailing St. Gall, passes into Lombardy, and fights with the Arians at Milan. Then Agilulf, the king, presents him with the estate at Bobbio. This was the last stage of his earthly journey. The old man

His wander-
ings with
St. Gall.

works at the building, which becomes a citadel of orthodoxy against the Arians and pagans, and a centre of classical learning.

The *dénouement* of the romance of St. Columban is, the reader will observe, the point at which the critical history of Bobbio begins. That there were Irish monks in the cloister, perhaps from the late fifteenth century, and that the allegorical story of the saint was conceived at some time in the next age, are the elementary facts from which the whole narrative may be understood. The Irish Benedictines of Bobbio, Luxeuil, and the connected monasteries gratified both a national and a religious sentiment in compiling the Acts of their patron saint. These flowers of poesy sprang from the same spot whence a miraculous herb sprang up beneath his footsteps, specimens of which the Abbots of Bobbio were once wont to send to kings and princes "for the benediction of St. Columban."

But the Irish monks under his rule were but a branch of the Benedictines, and it is impossible to admit that there were Benedictines in Ireland before, at the earliest, the thirteenth century. The daring fable of literary culture in that island in early ages conceals the fact of its dense ignorance. The less evidence, the greater the need of extraordinary efforts in fiction, by which a magical light is cast athwart the darkness of a dismal past. The fascination of these tales lies in their improbabilities, nay, in their utter impossibilities. It may be taken for granted that whenever a monk alludes to classical learning, he is writing during the Revival.

Paris has been, at least from the time of the Revival of Letters, an important centre of culture. The Benedictines were the founders of its

The Irish monks were Benedictines.

Paris.

schools, at some time a little earlier, though not much, than the schools of Oxford and Cambridge.

But a history of the Paris Academy was not attempted until the seventeenth century. Attempts at history in the seventeenth century. Claudius Hemeræus, Doctor of the Sorbonne, and Canon of the Royal Church of St. Quintin, in a slight treatise of the year 1637 dedicated to Cardinal Richelieu, assumes—for it is part of the scholastic convention—that the illustrious glory of the Paris Academy began in the early twelfth century. It was understood that the Paris Academy originated in certain “Schools of the Bishops,” and that one of its earliest seats had been Mont St. Geneviève, in the time of Louis the Fat, Louis the Younger, and Philip Augustus.

And what is known of the Episcopal Schools? Absolutely nothing definite; for there is no record of the bishops themselves, independent of the tales of the cloisters. Hardly can it be in the taste of the present day to discuss the historic personality of St. Dionysius St. Denis. the Areopagite, commonly called St. Denis, who figures slightly in the canonical Acts of the Apostles, and much more strongly in certain extra-canonical narratives of the eclipse at the time of the Passion. There are also later Benedictine tales, written under the names of “Gregory of Tours” and “Venantius of Poitiers,” which relate how “Eusebius, a Syrian trader,” bought the episcopal palace, turned out the *Schola*—that is, the band of readers and chapters of his predecessor—and introduced Syrian ministers.*

The mythological thread is continued. St. Germain. St. Germanus, born of Eleutherius and Eusebia, succeeded to Eusebius. St. Germanus, according

* “Hist. Franc.,” 10. 26.

to a tale which can hardly be introduced with decency into a modern page, prophetically showed his virtue in a remarkable manner before his birth. Thus he precluded a life which was a continuous series of miracles. Study cannot have been a necessity in such an age; and we must descend much lower than the sixth century in the quest of the schools of Paris. We come then to the ideal of "Charlemagne," the offspring of the same imagination which created our "Alfred the Great," "the venerable Bede" and his disciples—a romantic link between the culture of England and France. For in the prosaic mood we must treat all the voluble talk of Charles's patronage of learning, and his institution of a University of Letters as bright bubbles of retrospective fancy. Nor is there anything more authentic in the tales of Louis the Pious and Eugenius the Second.

Charle-
magne.

A list of illustrious scholars—"Alcuin, Rabanus Maurus, Lupus of Ferrières, Æneas of Paris, Eric of Auxerre, Remy, Odo of Cluny," and others—stretches down to King Robert of the Capetian line. It will be found that the works planned and executed under these names are part of the same Benedictine literary system that we suppose to have been devised in the cloisters of the Campagna. There was little or no reading of such works until some time in the sixteenth century. It will be impossible, it is to be feared, to ascertain more than the faintest dawn of literary culture in Paris before that age. I subjoin a few particulars from the meagre works of Hemeræus and others, warning the reader at the same time that the dates given are not to be trusted. Even were they to be trusted, the scant supply of facts would show how dim and uncertain

Illustrious
scholars of
Paris.

were the retrospective glances that French scholars of a brilliant time cast upon the culture of mediæval Paris.

There are indistinct references dated in the thirteenth century to the Schola in the Parvis, Notre Dame, or St. Mary. or Porch of St. Mary. For example, in a document dated 1268 there is a story of armed men who attacked clerical scholars meeting in the Parvis for the purpose of walking or discussion, and wounded some of them. In 1285 certain clerics murdered a scholar who was walking there at eventide, and were sentenced to deprivation. The Parvis must have been, like that of our St. Paul's, London, in Chaucer's time, a place of resort for scholars; but of any teaching that went on we have no authentic record. There are florid allusions in late Benedictine or kindred orders who write under the names of Philip, Abbot of Good Hope, Peter of Blois, and the like.

Many documents have been collected by Du Boulay or Bulæus, who wrote several folios on the Paris school some thirty-seven years later than Hemeræus. He adds little or nothing to our definite information. Still later, Launoy of the Sorbonne, writing in 1672—a sceptical time—frankly admits that fable had been busy with the origin of the school. He knows that it was founded by the monks of the Order of St. Benedict; he cites a number of their pretended writers of early times: a St. Remy, a Flodoard, an Aimoin, a Wilram; but he could do little more. Thirty years later, had he so chosen, Hardouin could have given the truer story of the Paris Academy to the world. His extant hints on the subject are worthy of attention. He points to the cloisters of St. Germain, of St. Denis, of St. Victor, and

Histories by
Buleus and
Launoy.

to others connected with them at Rheims, Floriac, Luxeuil, Corbey, as among the chief forges of Patristic literature. He thinks that the work could not have been begun until the fourteenth century.

The list of great Masters of Theology before that age is certainly fabulous. A list has, of course, been made out in accord with the Benedictine system. There is Peter the Eater, Peter of Poitiers, Peter Abelard, Peter Lombard, all of the twelfth century, because the theory held that this was the Scholastic age. But profound ignorance of the works ascribed to these divines obtains even in the late fifteenth century.

List of
Masters of
Theology.

Authentic particulars of the time when literary polemic began against the Jews in the French schools entirely fail us, both on the Benedictine and the Jewish side. Equally uncertain is it when the teaching of the Bible began. But a large glance at the state of Europe may convince us that the class of teachers called Biblical professors, those called Professors of Sentences, and those called Summists, was not considerable at the time of the Reformation. Luther is one of the first Biblical Professors who stands forth in the daylight; nor is it possible to discover much use of the Bible in teaching before the end of the fifteenth century. The same remark applies to the "Sentences" ascribed to Peter Lombard, and the "Summa" ascribed to St. Thomas Aquinas.

It is a reflection of the habitually barbarous and fighting habits of the Middle Ages that the system of Altercation or Wrangling seems to have been the great feature in education. Clever boys were trained in rhetorical Latin as an instrument of offence and defence; and some readers will

The practice
of Alterca-
tion.

recall the picture which our chronicler Stow gives of the scenes in the streets of London in the late sixteenth century, when the boys of St. Antony's School encountered those of St. Paul. Of the proverbial softening effect of letters upon manners, there is little evidence during the sixteenth century. The reader is astounded at the resources of scurrility and foul invective which ecclesiastics have at their disposal in their mutual controversies, at the low buffoonery which passes for wit. It is sometimes a pleasure to reflect that men's hearts were often much gentler than their tongues. Ruffianly manners have now all but passed away from the sphere of ecclesiastical letters; although offences of this kind at the present day more frequently proceed from that than from any other quarter. It was one of the effects of a principle of education based on absurdity. Passion in controversy implies that men are contending, not for the fact of truth, but for themselves or for their convent, which is the same thing.

In Paris the Canons of St. Victor had much to do with important parts of Church literature. The Canons of St. Victor. They may claim the honours of the "Summa," probably also of much of the literature ascribed to St. Augustine; but it is futile to suppose that such literature had been produced long before we can find traces of students who busied themselves with it. As for history, in any modern sense of the word, or indeed in any sense whatever, the serious attempt to ascertain the past cannot be traced higher than the time of Francis I. The theological dream possessed and engrossed the minds of all students; and such a mood is fatal to accurate inquiry in any department of human knowledge.

The faculties of Arts, of Medicine, of Canon Law,

were all filled by clergymen, and all subordinated to the theological and ecclesiastical interest. Arts and Medicine were under great debt The Doctors of Decrees. to the Arabians and Jews. The Canon Law of the Decretum was a Benedictine system. It was antedated from Bologna several centuries before the time of its actual fabrication. There is a story to the effect that in 1384 there was a quarrel between the Canons of Paris and the Doctors of Decrees, on account of the objection of the former to the setting up of a separate school of sacred law, as it was termed. The Canons gained their point in an appeal to Clement VII., and brought back the faculty of law to the cloister school. They acquired the style and dignity of Regents, their disciples that of Scholars. The whole story is probably one of a mass of analogous fictions from a late time, designed to secure antiquity for those privileges.

We inquire what was the state of literature in Paris, what in mere point of bulk were the books to be found in the cloisters at the close of the fifteenth century? State of literature in Paris. Certain lists have been handed down to us, but again the reader must be warned against the rash acceptance of the dates affixed to them. On the application, however, of any critical test, it will be apparent that at any time before that of the Medicis, a very small room would have held the whole of the books extant in Paris.

An old agreement has been produced between the Chapter and the Chancellor, from which we learn that the duty of the Chancellor is to correct, to bind and keep in good order, the books of the Paris church not used at the mass. What were these books? In a document dated some sixty years later, a custodian mentions only—

A Bible, in four volumes ;
 Lives of the Saints and Expositions, in five volumes ;
 Martrivetus ;
 A new and an old Pastorale, a Collectarium, five
 Psalters, etc. ;

Again, a few years later, Stephen, Archdeacon of Canterbury, is supposed to bequeath some books to the poor scholars of the Parvis at Paris. They are committed to the care of the Chancellor, John of Orleans, and consist of the following works :—

A Bible, without gloss, complete ;
 Genesis and Exodus, glossed, in one volume ;
 Exodus, glossed, by itself ;
 Ezechiel, glossed, by itself ;
 The Gospels, glossed, in one volume by themselves ;
 A Psalter, glossed, complete ;
 Four books of Sentences ;
 Books of Numbers ;
 Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Deuteronomy, glossed, in one
 volume ;
 The Epistles of Paul, glossed ;
 Job, glossed ;
 Summa on Vices ;
 The Epistles of Paul, glossed, with a lesser gloss ;
 Book of Machabees 1 and 2, glossed to cap. x. ;
 Gospel of Mark, glossed.

Given in the year 1271, on the day of the Apostles Symon and Jude.

Postillate Bible, in two volumes, which Bishop Stephen added ;

Originale of the Sentences of Master Peter Lombard
 . . . of calf-skin, partly depilate to the year 1271.

Another list of the books for common use in the

Armory of St. Mary of Paris names thirty-eight volumes of books of the Bible and one volume of Sentences of Master Peter of Poitiers. These particulars are supposed to come from the thirteenth century. There is a general value, and but a very general value, in inventories of books like the above. Our English scholars have collected similar lists referring to about the same period ; but it must be borne in mind that it is very doubtful, as we shall hereafter see, whether the custom of dating Anno Domini had begun in the thirteenth century. It does not follow that documents so dated are supposit ; but they would wear a better appearance of genuineness were they dated by the year of a pope, an abbot, or a bishop.

After all that has been adduced on the rarity and dearness of books in " the thirteenth century " and the following ages, it is still not easy ^{Rarity of books.} to appreciate this negative evidence and its historical significance. Hemeræus mentions that a Paris doctor who enjoyed a rich deanery, Nicolas à St. Just, ordered in his will, 1319, that a volume of the Bible should be restored to a college which had lent it to him. It was common enough for a scholar to give a bond for the restoration of a book so borrowed. There is a tale so late as the time of John Selden, though contradicted, in this relation. Books were so far from being necessities, they were the last of luxuries men thought of indulging, even in the colleges. Through the long period covered by Mr. Thorold Rogers' laborious researches, from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, it is remarkable how few are the items relating to the purchase of books in England by the learned bodies. The small libraries said to have been extant at the end of the fourteenth century or at the beginning of the next were the collections of princely donors.

The negative evidence is here quite massive. Steady attention to it dissipates the dream of the early glory of the Paris School, and leaves us till near the close of the fifteenth century with a few Bibles, Missals, Lives of Saints, copies of the Benedictine Rule—that Summary of Christianity, as Bossuet has called it—Books of Sentences, and the like.

A Benedictine School which is linked with England by legendary memories is that of Bec in Normandy, illustrated by the name of Lanfranc. The monk of the Order who writes under the *nom de plume* of “Orderic,” and probably at the time to which I have so often referred—“Orderic of St. Evreuil”—writes with a view to glorify the antiquity of Bec, and the memory of his illustrious *confrères*. In other words, he writes to advertise certain productions of his collaborators in fiction. He wields the usual flowery Benedictine style; he pretends that under Lanfranc “a library of philosophic and divine letters shone forth,” that the sage was “very able in the solution of knotty questions in both subjects,” and that “under his mastership the Normans first applied themselves to the literary art,” and that “from the school of Bec there went forth eloquent sophists in divine and secular studies.” And so forth.

All this is part of the Benedictine system: tales easily invented and easily believed at the time when the same class of men were entertaining our ancestors with tales of the Normans. It must be repeated in the interests of the fact, that neither in the eleventh nor the twelfth century was any such culture possible in any coenobium of the Order. Beneath the fable, however, may lie the fact that Bec had been founded by Italian monks from Pavia during the Revival. Another writer of the same

The School
of Bec.
Lanfranc.

Order, who adopts the *nom de plume* of "Milo Crispinus, Abbot of Westminster," produces a life of Lanfranc, which proves to be, like many other similar biographies, a lesson in allegorical form on the proper virtues of the monks. The absurd affectation of abject humility cloaking an ambition the most thirsty and insatiable, is obvious enough in the story of Lanfranc. Strange that sober English laymen, who are supposed to detest such affectations with a perfect hatred, should continue to copy and edit these tales as if they were genuine narrative!

In those ideal days, the glorious days of Lanfranc, the more the monk hid himself from the crowd, the more his fame went abroad. He was dear to the aristocracy. Young nobles from far and near came to study with Lanfranc under lowly Abbot Herluin. From the generous root of the great spiritual tree in the garden of Bec, what vigorous scions sprouted forth! There was Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury; Gilbert Crispinus, Abbot of Westminster; Henry, Dean of Canterbury; Hernostus, Bishop of Rochester; and Gundulf, his successor—all pupils of Bec!

How warm is the love of the monk to his Alma Mater! He will freely sacrifice all scruple about historic fact to this love. How entertaining the picture which the Abbot of Westminster sketches of Lanfranc as Archbishop of Canterbury in the presence of the Pope at Rome! The Holy Father rises from his chair to meet him, telling him that this honour is due not to the archbishop, but to the School of Bec, where he had sat at Lanfranc's feet. "I rise in your presence, for you are my master; I embrace you as my paedagogue, and not as an archbishop."

At what time did this manner of literary art set in?

A reference to the parallel art of Church painting might enable us nearly to solve that question. But without touching further on that point, it may be sufficient to observe that these pretended "Reminiscences of Bec" could not have been offered to the reading world at any time before there was something in the way of literature and of culture at Bec to justify such pretensions to a learned past. It is to the seeker of facts an absurdity to suppose such a state of things at Bec before the dispersion of Italian scholars through the West in the late fifteenth century.

Other Benedictine confederates who write under the *noms de plume* of "William of Malmesbury," "William of Jumièges," and date their writings in the twelfth century, are agreed on the same fable of the glory of Bec, of the Lombard Lanfranc and his disciple Anselm. And yet—surprising fact!—when we open the work of the Benedictine of St. Albans, who is planted about the middle of the fifteenth century, and writes under the name "Thomas Walsingham," you find that the legend of Lanfranc and of Anselm appears to have shrivelled down to a dry notice. He describes Anselm as a Lombard boy of good education and character, who studied three years in Gaul, who crossed into Normandy and joined himself to the Prior of Bec, who then ruled the public school by the permission or command of Abbot Herluin.

We have heard in our time talk of a "historical school of St. Albans." There never was a historical school in that cloister. A few Benedictine mythologists may have been busy there in the time of King Henry VII. in correspondence with Italian head-quarters. The facts correspond to those of Monte Cassino at the same period. It appears

Rise of the
Lanfranc
legend.

probable that Walsingham, as he calls himself, had the first sketch of the legend which was to be elaborated by his literary *confrères* somewhat later. It may be noticed that among the Lanfranc legends an epitaph on him has been ascribed to Philip, Abbot of Good Hope in Hainault, of the connected Order of Prémontré, in the twelfth century. The lines are, perhaps, of sufficient elegance for the sixteenth century. Other threads in the same web of fiction may be traced under the names of "Ivo of Chartres," "Sigebert of Gemblours," and his continuator, "Robert de Monte."

The fables about Bec were devised about the same time with the fables about Monte Cassino. If, say the Benedictines, Monte Cassino was the oldest, Bec was the most splendid of their seats of learning. Rome looks up to Bec, Greece worships Bec, the wonder of all Europe is Bec. How fine the description, "Disciples of Lanfranc!" How great the joy to study where the kinsmen of Pope Alexander had studied! Yet one small bookcase or shelf would have been ample accommodation for all the books that Bec could produce at the time of the invention of printing, if, indeed, it could produce any books at all.

But Bec furnishes another legendary link with England in the name of Roger Vacarius, prior of the monastery and afterwards abbot, who, according to the tradition, passed into England and was the first to teach our people what the monks called "the Law of the Cæsars." It is a slander upon the memory of the Cæsars, however, that the codes bearing the names of Theodosius and of Justinian—the fabrications of the monks themselves—should have been labelled the Law of the Cæsars. The Benedictine tradition concerning these false codes refers to the

twelfth century. But it is certain that neither at Bologna nor in any other city of Europe was there an audience at that time capable of listening to lectures on Roman Law. The personality and activity of Vacarius rests upon no genuine testimony whatever, but merely on the concerted fable of a knot of monks who write under the names of John of Salisbury, Bishop of Chartres ; Theobald, ex-Abbot of Bec and Archbishop of Canterbury, and perhaps a Canon of St. Victor.

If the reader can figure to himself "many rich and poor" coming to the lectures of Vacarius in the year 1149, he should be able, in support of his imagination, to fix on the place where these lectures were held. Was it Oxford, Cambridge, or London? Or in the house of Theobald of Canterbury? The Benedictines of St. Maur may well admit, after perusing the tales of their romancing predecessors, that on this point *non omnino liquet*. Without dwelling longer on these absurdities, it suffices to remark that the study of law in general did not begin in any school before the sixteenth century. In our own country the study was yet in its infancy in the days of Coke, of Selden, and of Bacon.

After what has been said of Charles the Great and his fabulous schools on the Continent, it is needless to detain the reader with the fables respecting his English counterpart in the Benedictine scheme of fiction, King Alfred the Great. St. Neot, also, may take his place in the ideal distance. Oxford, like Paris and like Cambridge, is a Benedictine foundation. Its early name was the Priorate of St. Benedict of Oxon, or Gloucester College. The abbots and priors of the province of Canterbury were the directors of study. It is said that in the year 1290 thirty Abbots

The School
of Oxford.

and Priors met at Abingdon, and provided for the building of the Priorate. But we have to wait for half a century before we hear of the erection of a Theological Chair with a stipend in the College (1343). This was at a Provincial Chapter at Northampton. A century elapses, and we hear of another Provincial Synod in the same town (1444), when the studies in Oxford College are discussed in subordination to the great question of monastic discipline. The Theological Chair was always to be held by a Benedictine.

During this period, it is said, the Benedictines had colleges also at Canterbury and at Durham. But it will presently appear how difficult it is to obtain, whether from the sources or from John Leland, who made the tour of the religious houses just before the Dissolution, a genuine list of scholars, or of writings before the introduction of printing. Leland was baffled by the systematic tricks of the monks and friars in disguising their personalities and ante-dating their writings. We read of miracles of learning, like Adam Eston of Oxford, Cardinal Priest of St. Cæcilia, or of Roger Bacon the Franciscan, and many others. But our search for matter of fact is constantly disappointed down to the time when John Feckenham, last Abbot of Westminster, dies in the Tower of London; or of Wisbeach, after long imprisonment, "an unvanquished athlete of the orthodox faith" (1585).

The facts or the fables about Cambridge are of similar character. The Benedictines were its founders, as of Oxford; and whether that be an honour ^{Cambridge.} or otherwise it may be left to the members of the University to determine. Nothing is gained by examining the annals of the other great Orders, since they proceed upon the like principles of historic imagination

with their predecessor. It is only by the rigorous scrutiny of the catalogues of books that we can hope to arrive at some rough estimate of the state of culture in England at the time of the rise of the House of Tudor.

The orthodox Benedictine theory, however, is that the School of Cambridge is older by more than 200 years than that of Oxford, and owed its foundation to King Sigebert—a theory that still prevailed in the time of Edmund Spenser. In the general and gradual subsidence of fable, these theories have been abandoned; and equally must those who desire to touch historic *terra firma* in this matter abandon the hope of finding it in the twelfth century. But Oxford and Cambridge were mere boys' schools, and so remained during that time when the most splendid, though unchartered, University in England was flourishing—I refer to the society of wits, of poets, soldiers, lawyers, travellers, statesmen, who were to be found in the Temple and other Inns of Court, of whom we begin to hear in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

England was a little later than France and Burgundy in possessing the means of literary culture. The tradition runs that the library of 900 volumes collected by Charles V., or the Wise, was carried into England by the Duke of Bedford, 1429, but its destination has not been traced.

In reference to Oxford, we have the tradition about the book-loving Richard Aungerville of Bury, Bishop of Durham. Durham College at Oxon, the Benedictines say, had been founded by him about 1290; and at his death in 1345, he left his books, which are said to have been greater in number than those of all the rest of the bishops, to

English
libraries.

Richard
Aungerville
of Bury.

Durham College. But we hear of a library, in the sense of a separate building or room, for the first time in the reign of Henry IV. The books were chained to pews or studies; and it needs an effort of imagination to make clear to ourselves how few they were, how barren of interest, and how little used. We have no list of the books; but the names of William Appalby and Thomas Rowe have been handed down as the first custodians.

It was not, in fact, until more than a century after the death of Richard of Bury that the faint beginnings of literary culture in England can be traced. At the end of the fifteenth century, Trithemius, the Abbot of Spanheim, sets down to the authorship of Aungerville the little treatise called the "Philobiblon," perhaps the first work which shows any disinterested zeal for liberal studies in England. The author has a passion for books. They are the masters who train us without the use of the rod. They are without wrath and threats, without promises and bribes. You find them awake when you draw near. They do not run away when you ask a question. You may blunder, but they do not growl; nor will they laugh at you, though you may be a dunce. Books alone are liberal and free! They give to all that ask; they set all at liberty, themselves your attentive slaves.

The "Philobiblon," probably of the fifteenth century.

He thinks, after the fashion of his time and order, that so great a blessing as books must be found typified in the Old Testament. They are the Wells of Abraham, or the Golden Pot with the manna, the Rock flowing with honey, the Tree of Life, the River of Paradise, the Ark of Noah, the Ladder of Jacob, the Stones of Testimony, the Sling of David, the Ears of

Corn rubbed by apostolic hands. Books are to be preferred to riches and bodily pleasures. Good religious men will write books, and the bad will occupy themselves with other things. He praises the early Mendicants, and blames, in the like temper to that of the poet of *Canterbury Tales*, or the author of "The Beggar's Petition," the sloth, the greed, the luxury of the friars of his day. The example of Paul is cited as that of a diligent literary Apostle, who sends for his travelling-case, his books, and especially his parchments.*

The late date of the author of the "Philobiblon" may also be inferred from the fact that he insists on the necessity of Arabic and Hebrew, as well as of Greek and Latin, of grammar and poetry. No considerable audience could have been found at Oxford or elsewhere, to listen to eloquent exhortations like these earlier than the late fifteenth century.† Most certainly, down to the time of the dissolution of the monasteries, a very small apartment at Oxford would have sufficed for the books and for the reading men in the University. According to the tale, the library founded by Duke Humphrey of Gloucester consisted of merely 129 volumes.

* 2 Tim. iv. 13.

† The book is said to have been first printed in 1483 at Spire.

CHAPTER IX.

LIBRARIES IN FLORENCE AND ROME.

THE name of Pope Nicholas V. has come down to us from some time during the Revival of Letters as epochal in connection with books and libraries. But it will be found that his biographers wrote at a very late date, and give us only general impressions of the state of culture at the Papal Court. Thomas Parentucelli of Sarzana, then, was a Florentine humanist, and one of the *protégés* of Cosmo de Medici. He is said to have "arranged" the Library of St. Mark (1444), and to have been a zealous copyist of MSS., and student of all the science of the time. Wisdom and virtue were supposed to ascend with him the Chair of the Pontiff; but it has never been explained how the pale sickly scholar won his way to that seat, unless the reader thinks the enthusiastic explanation of one of his biographers sufficient: that it was due to his "Ciceronian eloquence."

In Rome, if we may trust a Bull of Eugenius IV., an institute of learning bearing the name of a University had been established at St. Eustachio in 1431, but it enjoyed no wide reputation, though George of Trapezant and Pico of Mirandola taught there.* There Nicholas V. is supposed to have

* Manetti and Vespasiano in Mur. III., ii. 908 and xxv.; Piccolomini.

turned the Vatican into a workshop of copyists, and to have been followed on his journeys by a small host of these librarii. The translation of the Greek classics is also said to have gone forward at a rapid pace under the direction of Poggio, Valla, and others. Then the institution of libraries naturally followed the collection of MSS., for there had been no library in Rome. According to the Letters of Trauersari, the Camaldolese monk, there was nothing noteworthy either in Rome or in the Abbey of Grotta Ferrata about the year 1432. And this report of the nakedness of the land is amply confirmed by statements of the Benedictines. But if they suppose that the libraries had been partly destroyed for the sake of the parchments in which "to paint the divine face of Veronica," the conjecture is ludicrous and inadequate.

There is incidental evidence that there were more books at Avignon than in Rome; a fact which should be connected with the legend of the migration of the Popes from that city. If, then, Nicholas V. did anything for the Vatican Library, he must have been the creator of it. The tale runs that at his death the catalogue contained 5000 volumes; but it is evident, from what follows, that we have here one of the numerous library myths of the time. For the Spaniard, Alfonso Borgia, succeeded to the tiara under the title of Calixtus III. He had been professor at Lerida, and passed for the first jurist of his time, an old man of seventy-seven at the time of his election. Is it well conceivable that such a man, at such an epoch, would neglect the recent literary collections of his predecessor?

Yet the tale runs that Calixtus III. gave away several

hundred Greek MSS. to Cardinal Isidore, and that he was barbarian enough to tear away the gold and silver clasps from the books which his predecessor had lovingly clothed in red samite. Bessarion and Filelfo are supposed to lament over these outrages. Concerning Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini there are interesting tales, and many writings which saw the light during the sixteenth century have been set down to his authorship; but Pius II. was busy with political intrigues and nepotism, and did nothing, so far as we know, for libraries. His successor, Pietro Barbo, Cardinal of St. Mark and Paul II., is said to have been fond of antiques, greatly addicted to show and splendour, an emulator of the Sultan; in this Pope's court literary men found little countenance. With the exception of the statement of the Benedictines, that he ordered a catalogue of the books at Monte Cassino, there is nothing to connect Paul II. with libraries.

Francesco Rovere succeeded him as Sixtus IV. (1471). He was a nominee of the Orsini and the Borgia, and General of the Franciscans, one of the most learned monks of the time. Yet in his portrait the traits of the ascetic quite melt away in the expression of the secular and ambitious prince. Sixtus was a great nepotist, like his predecessors, and the Papacy was manifestly nothing but a "kingdom of this world" in his time. However, he who had formerly been a doctor at Padua is reported to have built a library consisting of four rooms (1475). His secretary was the noted Platina, who was made librarian. But the relics of this library are scarce discernible, and few are the particulars which Assemani, the faithful conservator of Vatican traditions, can give. The Secret Archives are, however, first named

Pius II.

P. Barbo
(Paul II.).F. Rovere
(Sixtus IV.).

Platina.

The Secret
Archives.

in this connection ; they were contained in three presses and four chests of cypress wood. This particular is most important in reference to the late beginning of any Papal literature. It is well known that in these so-called Archives there is hardly a document referring to an earlier period than the eleventh century ; and the fact undoubtedly is that, about the time of Platina, the whole enterprise of making out a Succession of the Popes from the time of St. Peter was being put into execution.

About 1518 the Secret Library is said to have been placed in the Castle St. Angelo, yet it acquired apparently no great bulk till the time of Paul V. At the end of the last century the Secret Archives were united with the Vatican Library.*

With regard to the state of libraries in Rome in the brilliant time of Leo X. He is said to have brought the remains of the library of St. Mark's, Florence, which had been dispersed during her ill fortunes, to Rome about the year 1508 ; he is said to have acquired the first five books of Tacitus' "Annals." But the particulars are, as usual, extremely meagre in reference to the amount of books in any collection in Rome. There is a mention of the rich Grimani collection in a letter of Erasmus in 1515 ; it was removed to Venice a few years later, and was destroyed by fire.

We meet constantly with flattering eulogies of particular scholars and libraries, but fail to find any mass of literary facts corresponding to the expectations thus raised. Thus Inghirami, librarian of the Vatican, who died in 1516, is extolled as the "Cicero of his age" because he was a fine speaker. As

* Gregorovius, "Gesch d. Stadt Rome," viii. 293.

a collector, he is said to have brought classical MSS. from the Benedictine cloister at Bobbio, perhaps among them the "Republic" of Cicero, which saw the light only in the time of the zealous literate, Cardinal Mai. It is not his own pen, but the pencil of Raphael, which has assured to Inghirami immortality, as Gregorovius observes. It was Beroald, his successor, who edited the noted MS. of Tacitus, the one ^{Beroald} ^{and} ^{Aleander.} important "find" of the time of Leo X. Aleander, a little later in the same office, an early friend of Erasmus and Aldus, but a bitter opponent of Luther, passed away in 1542, without leaving any literary monument behind him.

Retrospective fancy has delighted to glorify the epoch of Leo; yet all the studies in the Roman university must have been quite elementary, according to our modern ideas, in his time. In 1735 there was published in Rome an Oration which embraced "nearly the whole of the Roman history," and is said to have been delivered in the Capitol at the feast of the Palilia, when the statue of Leo was unveiled. It is characteristic of that fusion of old Roman with Oriental ideas which began to prevail, that the orator begins with Adam and with Romulus; descending the stream of time, he depicts the glories of the old Roman empire, then of the Papacy, finally of the great living Pontiff himself. The good things of this life and of the life to come—all are due to the beneficent rule. We listen for hours to this strain of declamation, imaginary members of the audience. His closing words remind us of the pretensions, quite recent, of the "Hebrew Boy" (in the phrase of the monks) to supplant great Jove on that high and sacred seat. Addressing the Virgin: "Wherefore Thee, and no longer Jupiter, Thee, Virgin of the

Capitol, who dost preside over the relics of this city and hill, dost guard Rome and the Capitol, I pray," etc. —for the long life of the Pope.*

Special attention is called to Urbino, because it is linked with the England of Henry VIII. in the person of Polydore Vergil. He, in his work on "Inventors," refers to the fame of its library. Bembo, the noted Ciceronian, was a member of its learned circle about 1506. Sadolet, reputed author of a prohibited commentary on the Epistle to the Romans and friend of the Reformers, is supposed to extol Urbino as a very focus of genius and learning, unrivalled in Italy. Yet Sadolet had studied at Ferrara; and Ferrara, no less than Padua, might readily be conceived the most illuminated place in the world, if we listened to the declaimers in its favour. The same monotone of flattery always prevails, and always conceals a great dearth of genuine culture. John Colet, founder of St. Paul's School, no doubt visited all these learned circles. He was an epochal man in every respect, but especially as the discoverer of Paul's Epistles to the English clergy and people, as one who was regarded, in virtue of his gifts as preacher and scholar, as "the Apostle Paul of England."

The significance of the Humanists, the lovers of letters and of liberty, is not only that they bear witness to the true sentiment of Rome and Italy in general, but that they were committed, by their tastes and their enthusiasms, to an antipathy to the literature of the monks, the rise of which they witnessed. It is sufficient to cite some traditions about Poggio

* Gregorovius (viii. 297) points to the irony of the inscription of the new Magistrate in memory of Sept. 20, 1870, when the Papacy fell, a few steps from the statue of Leo.

and Valla to show that the notion of culture in the monasteries during ages preceding the revival is pure illusion ; and that in fact the hydra of the Church fable began to rear its head at the time the classical literature began to be zealously cultivated. As before, the dates are not to be trusted, but the general impressions are to be carefully noted.

Thus of Poggio it is said that he entered the Papal service at a very early age, and was scribe under eight Popes, without ever residing in Rome, ^{Poggio.} that he went with the Court to Constance and saw Jerome of Prague suffer ; that he then entered on a career of literary discovery in Germany, France, and England. He scoured the Campagna searching for relics of antiquity, all his zest being in the classical direction. His attacks upon the regular clergy, especially the Franciscans, were unsparing, while Nicholas V. is said to have protected him. The greatest work ascribed to him is the " History of the Florentine Republic from 1350 to 1455." The date of his death is given in 1459 by sixteenth-century writers.

The important question arises : How many classical or ecclesiastical MSS. did Poggio find in the Benedictine cloisters before the time of the printers ? For his fame is that of the discoverer of MSS. in the monasteries of St. Gall (where Quintilian reposed, which he copied in thirty-two days), New Corbey, and other cloisters of that Order. Again, the reader must be warned against reliance on any representations which seem to hint of classical culture in the monastic seats until quite on the close of the fifteenth century. It is in the " Diatribe " of Cardinal Quirinus, himself a Benedictine, that you may ^{Literary state of the cloisters.} read a description of the neglected state of ^{St. Gall.}

St. Gall at the same time that culture has hardly begun in Rome, from the pen of Cincius, a contemporary of Poggio. At the time these tales were written down none dared openly to confess that discoveries of books, real and imaginary, had only been beginning with the latest decades of the age; but that is the iterated and confirmed impression which the student derives from the perusal of a number of such tales.

More significant than the name of Poggio is that of Valla. Valla as a symbol of the struggles and achievements of the Humanists in their opposition to the false literature which the monks were foisting in the name of antiquity upon the world. Here again the exact period of Valla cannot be defined. The discrepancy in the dates has been pointed out in an essay by Zumpt. His education is said to have been in Rome, under Bruni and Aurispa, at a time when Rome, in the language of another Humanist, was one of the freest places in the world for the honest scholar. He, like Poggio, held up the monkish idea of virtue to scorn, and even announced the opinion that women of pleasure were of more use to the world than nuns. He refuted the false "Donation of Constantine"—in all probability immediately after it had been composed and saw the light. He also denied the genuineness of the Epistles of Jesus and Abgarus; in other words, he assailed the first attempt at Church History which had been recently produced in the cloisters. Nothing could exceed the bitterness with which he declaimed against the "new tyranny," as, indeed, it was, of the Pope. Reginald Peacock, Bishop of Chichester, is said to have denied the genuineness of the "Donation" about the same time; a statement which requires examination. My opinion is that these writings were not heard of until some time

in the sixteenth century, when men began to talk of Wiclif, Luther, and Marsilius of Padua.

When the system of literature of those times is better understood, it will be perceived that a variety of writings have been set down to Valla of the authenticity of which there is no proof. But all the more impressive is the general fact that there was a knot of scholars in the West whose pride was in the revival of pure Latin as the vehicle of all true civility and humanity, and who could not endure the fables and the false logic of the rising clerical and scholastic system of the convents. It remains to observe that some notes on the Vulgate ascribed to Valla saw the light in 1505 at Paris. He is said to have died in 1457, a Canon of the Lateran.

With regard to the Greek scholars of the Revival we are dependent on one or two writers like P. Cortese, Ph. Villani, and P. Jovius, who furnish us indeed with lists of learned men from the late fourteenth century—a Chrysoloras, a George of Trapezant, a Theodore of Gaza, a Bessarion, and some others. But their chronology is of doubtful worth; and as it is abundantly clear that neither in Paris, nor London, nor Oxford, nor any other Northern city did Greek begin to be cultivated until the time of our Henry VIII., so it is not safe to assume a very much earlier culture in that language in any city of Italy.

All the facts that can be collected about the activity of anti-monkish Humanists appear to me to be confirmatory of the opinion that a stealthy literary activity had been going on in Subiaco, Grotta Ferrata, and Monte Cassino about the time of Torquemada and Bessarion; but that men were not fully conscious that the foundations of a fictitious Church History had been

laid until the time of Leo X. The wretched compilation called the "Library" of Photius, which is said to have been printed from a MS. of Bessarion, and which is one of the earliest attempts to make out a list of imaginary Church authors, may be cited as a notorious specimen of that secret activity.

I would now invite the attention of the reader to some particulars relating to the Printers in Italy. Italy, because the establishment of Libraries and the practice of Typography were clearly parts of one great movement in reviving art. The quantity and quality of the Printers' work must be one of the best indices to the state of writing, reading, and thinking in the small educated class of four hundred years ago.

The expense of copying teaches us how small the purchasing and reading class must have been, however large the thoughtless class of listeners to oral recitation. It was held for an extraordinary thing that Vespasiano, the Florentine bookseller, could deliver to Cosmo di Medici 200 volumes in the course of twenty-two months. He had employed forty-five scribes on the operation. A copy of Cicero's Epistles cost about ten ducats, a Bible at least three or four pounds sterling, probably much more. It has never been sufficiently considered that the work of the early printers was to extend the enjoyment of a rare luxury in a very small class, by no means to provide a necessary for the multitude.*

Using our sources, as before, with great caution, we learn from a biographer of Paul II. that it was in his time the German printers Sweynheim, Pannartz, and Hahn came to Rome, about

The German
printers in
Rome.

* See the particulars in Gregorovius' seventh volume of the "History of Rome."

1464 or 1465. They had been apprentices of Faust at Mainz, whose press the Benedictines claim to have patronized. In Rome the printers found no patron, as indeed, according to the foregoing evidence, there was little for them to do; but gained shelter in the cloister of Subiaco, which was filled with German monks and under the protection of Torquemada. It is but probable that the Benedictines had sent for them. Here Donatus, the grammarian, was printed; then the work of the monk who assumes the name of Lactantius; Cicero, "De Oratore," and Augustine, "De Civitate Dei." Most certainly neither of the "Fathers" was heard of until late in the fifteenth century, and their Latin is the Latin of the Renaissance.

A little later we find the Germans in the palace of the Massinii in Rome, printing Cicero's Letters. Then we hear of their falling into great poverty and distress about 1472, owing, as it is said, to competition and the absence of trade. They are supposed to tell Sixtus IV. that they have nothing but printed sheets in their house. In the course of seven or eight years they had printed more than 12,000 volumes. This statement is made in the fifth volume of the Bible with the Commentary of Nicolas de Lyra, bearing date 1472. Hardly can it be received as credible, or even intelligible, especially as Sweynheim and Pannartz seem to vanish from the field of knowledge without leaving a trace about the year 1476. Slight particulars of other German or Italian printers who are supposed to have set up their presses in cloisters or in the houses of the nobility in Rome have come down to us from a time never exactly ascertained.

From about 1469 printing is said to have gone on in Venice and Milan and other Italian cities to some

extent until the rise of Aldus (1494-1515), who gave new life to the art; before whose time, in fact, there was little printing of Greek books, nay, if the whole truth were known, little printing of any books at all.

If a critical scholar would undertake the examination of the whole statistics relating to this subject, he would render a considerable service to exact knowledge, for the want of which we remain under the spell of many illusions. It should be defined in the first place how many early printed books have come down to us; next, how many of these bear no date at all; and again, how many have, as comparison with Chronicles would show, been ante-dated, for interested reasons. It should also be considered how little consciousness is shown of any wonderful invention until the sixteenth century is far advanced, and how comparatively small is still the mass of printed books at the end of that age. The great jealousy and opposition which the printers had to encounter from various quarters should be borne in mind; also the fact that all artisans wrought in guilds with more or less of secrecy and mystery, and with free resort to a variety of protective fictions and interested statements.

When these points have been well weighed, it will be understood how certainly it follows that in no age of Italy were there more than a few readers of the Latin and Greek classics or of the Vulgate in the closing decades of the fifteenth century. When the troubles of their native land dispersed the Italian scholars westward, and men like C. Vitelli, Hadrian Castello, and Polydore Vergil came to England, it was little indeed in the way of substantial knowledge that they had to impart, however they might

impress upon their disciples the almost religious duty of turning over Cicero by night and by day, and of presenting even the most fabulous and worthless matter in the forms of pure Latin.

The erection of Greek printing-presses is ascribed to Chigi, who had one in his house, where in 1515 an edition of Pindar was printed, the first of Greek books that issued from any press in Rome. Leo X. had also a Greek press, whence issued the Scholia to Homer and to Sophocles about 1517-18. Nearly at the same time the first Greek press was set up in Paris; indeed, according to the dates handed down, a little earlier than in Rome.

The Greek
printing-
presses.

THE HUMANISTS AND THE MONKS.

In one of his lectures, given about fifty years ago, Edgar Quinet makes an observation to the effect that what the eighteenth century was to the Frenchmen, the sixteenth century had been to the Italian scholars. In naming some of the distinguished Humanists of that age, he says that to them the 1500 or 1600 years claimed by the Church appeared a "subtle dream." The phrase is striking, all the more because Quinet did not apprehend its full force. It is now time to say, with the utmost emphasis, that the Humanists had good ground for knowing that the Retrospect of the monkish Historians was in fact the subtle dream of art.

The whole evidence needs to be re-studied. The printers' and booksellers' statements should be analyzed. The dates of the scholars who are said to have flourished during the late fifteenth century should be revised. It should be noted that their individual personality is seldom discovered; that the names serve as Signs and

Symbols of the activity of certain undiscovered knots of scholars, who were forced to adopt various disguises and concealments. It is facts like these which explain the diversity of the works often assembled under a single name, a "Machiavelli" or the like; and which hint the nature of a literary life both without and within the Monasteries.

Here again I must content myself with a few general results in a field that should be thoroughly worked. There were Greeks in Italy who knew the Christian system of Ideas to be novel and more recent than the Mohammedan. There were Arabian philosophers who held the relativity of the truth of all religious systems, and whose ideas were in sympathy with those of the Greeks. There were also broad-minded Jews of the same school. The charming fable of the Three Kings in Boccaccio, taken up by Lessing, is significant of this tendency of opinion. There were cultivators of Platonism and neo-Platonism, followers of Porphyry and others of the good old times, who are denounced by the Benedictines as "mad dogs against Christ." There were men in Florence and Rome and Padua who could distinguish a spurious from a genuine Aristotle. There were men who saw in the system of the monks a reproduction of many of the features of the Orphic mysteries, or a continuation of them. Others struck at the very root of the system of Church fable which was coming into currency as a false representation of the Roman Empire. It was clearly seen by some that a new dogma in modification of El Islam was arising in the world. The monastic philosophy was denounced as barbarous.

A great effort was made to rise above the confusions of rival ecclesiastical parties. God as Supreme Being

was defined as the one immortal intellect present in all members of the human race, while miracles and personal immortality were denied. It could not be concealed that such doctrines were diametrically opposed to the Church ; and in the spirit of compromise or of self-defence the juggling of a "double Truth" was invented, an ecclesiastical and a rational : an illusion which, alas ! continues to deceive the judgment of many in our day. Men pretended to conform to the Catholic Church ; or it has been pretended on their behalf that they did so, whose opinions were entirely subversive of the system. The pictures of the court of Leo X. have been mostly drawn by unfriendly hands ; yet it is evident that there was that wide and varied culture which inevitably tends to tolerance. I say, without fear of contradiction, that the state of intellectual life in Italy, once elucidated by an unprejudiced examination of the sources, leaves, both in mass and in quality, nothing to be desired as proof that the monastic system of teaching was recent in the world. It was a yeasty time ; and men knew not what direction the Church would ultimately take.

There are things in the writings ascribed to Machiavelli and many others which come upon the reader with all the force of a Revelation when they are read in this light. Old Roman religion and virtue are contrasted with the supineness and passivity of the monastic system. The idea of the State cannot be reconciled with the idea of what the monks call the Civity of God. The unity and freedom of Italy are threatened by the Church. It is the criticism of men who are not introducing an innovation into the world, who are, on the contrary, loyal to the noblest traditions of antiquity, and who see in the ecclesiastical systems a menace to liberty and intelligence.

To bring this part of the argument to a simple issue. If I have convinced the reader that the Christian—that is, the Monastic Literature was in the early period of its life during 1480–1520, it is unnecessary to urge the evidence from the side of the Humanists. If, on the other hand, the reader hesitates to accept what seems so startling a novelty of opinion, he may be invited to refer the question afresh to the testimony, negative or positive, direct or indirect, of the classical scholars whose writings may fairly be referred to the same period. If he confines his attention to England alone, the testimony is very striking. We see Colet coming from Italy to discover the Apostle Paul and his writings to an aroused and curious English public; we find Erasmus here, one of the earliest names associated with the Greek Testament; here are Grocyn and William Latimer, and Lily, and Linacre, all of them classical Renaissance men, none of them, though clergymen, knowing much of Epistles, Gospels, or any other branch of the monastic literature.

Linacre had studied Latin and Greek under the most eminent scholars in Italy. He is said to have been the first Englishman who could read Aristotle and Galen in the original. He lived in the intimacy of the first two Tudor princes, founded the College of Physicians, enjoyed several Church preferments. His death is believed to have occurred in 1524, at the age of sixty-four. Such is the tradition. Now let me call attention to the remarkable story told of Linacre by Sir John Cheke in his tract on the “Pronunciation of the Greek Tongue”: “At an advanced age, broken by study and disease, and near to death, being a priest, he then first took the New Testament into his hands, and is said to have read through a few

chapters of Matthew. Having gone over the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters, he cast away the book again with all his force, and swore that either this was not the Gospel or we were not Christians." Thomas Fuller in his "Worthies" tries to give a good sense to the speech, as if the scholar were indignant with the practice of Christians, so at variance with God's precepts. But that does not explain the passionate gesture with the book. Suppose the scholar knew the Sermon on the Mount to be the moral philosophy of the monks and friars, one can understand the indignation with which he might repudiate such philosophy as a mere affectation on the part of men notorious for greed, ambition, intolerance, and every vice which in that philosophy they profess to condemn.

The recollection of incidents like these will the better enable the reader to appreciate the testimony of Polydore and of John Leland as to the state of English culture during the two first Tudor reigns. Both of these men were Humanists, religious lovers of the Classics; both were anti-monastic in temper; yet both were clergymen who acquiesced rather than believed in Church history. Polydore does not name Linacre; John Leland names him, only incidentally, in an article on William Tilly, *alias* Selling, a monk of Dover, ^{The monk Tilly.} who, in the reign of Henry VII., was one of the first to add the study of Classics to the study of piety, and who took the young Linacre with him to Italy, and left him at Bologna under the charge of Politian. There is, by the way, an attempt to account for the non-existence of a "treasure of books" brought back by Tilly to St. Saviour's, Dover, by the story of a riot and a fire. But the reader who has studied these stories will have no difficulty in understanding that

they are convenient inventions, designed to explain the great dearth of worthy books in the religious houses even so late as 1533-1539.

The reader might expect me in this place to say something of the "Utopia" ascribed to Sir Thomas More, as the work of an independent thinker whose opinions were alien from the system of the Church. There is, however, no contemporary testimony to the literary activity of More; the story of his life and works which has come down to us is a tissue of contradictions. We have the pleasure of gazing at the canvas of Holbein and of calling up the image of one of the sweetest and noblest spirits of the time; that is all. The "Utopia" dates from Louvain, 1566, and the allusions to the New World coincide with the general state of knowledge at that time, as I have elsewhere pointed out. It is said that learned men believed in the existence of Utopia as a territory in the West, and desired to send missionaries thither. However, let us use the famous passage on the nature of belief and the consequent duty of toleration in order to cast a light back, perhaps, to the time of Erasmus and his friends. "*A man cannot make himself believe anything he pleases. They do not drive any to dissemble their thoughts by threatenings, so that men are not tempted to lie or disguise their opinions; which, being a sort of fraud, is abhorred by the Utopians.*"

Admirable words! But under the pressure of an ecclesiastical inquisition our noblest and dearest spirits could not openly utter their opinions. There has been much fraud on the part of all the religious parties, much of innocent disguise on the part of secular scholars from the Caxton and Chaucer guild downwards. I believe I am the first to point out that the men of Letters who took shelter under the mask of "Chaucer" are

in reality men of the English Renaissance, if that term be employed to denote the beginnings of our culture. They were men living under the first or second Tudor prince ; that they were Humanists, Tolerants, keen but genial critics of the monastic system and in part of the monastic writings, must be apparent to all who study those varied pages.

The Humanists, despite many exaggerated statements about their activity, undoubtedly rendered a great service to culture. It is to them that we owe the traditional love of the Latin and Greek Classics, of those books which, as Gibbon says, "have much to teach," and the books which teach us "to live, to reason, and to die." It can hardly be doubted that the leading spirits among the regular clergy would have neglected or even have destroyed the Classics, as utterly incompatible with the system, had it not been for the Humanists. As it is, the monks have done a great injury to the Latin Classics by a deliberate practice of contemptible interpolation at the time when they were becoming masters of the education of Europe. The Humanists, though united with one another in a kind of unchartered corporation, as close attention to their literary remains appears to prove, were unable to hold their ground against the organized preachers of ecclesiastical fables. About the middle of the sixteenth century Paulus Jovius is mourning over the loss of freedom ; and Gyraldi is launching a bitter invective against men who were unworthy to carry on the great cause of Letters.

CHAPTER X.

THE BENEDICTINE SYSTEM OF ENGLISH HISTORIANS.

It is necessary to point to the Catalogue ascribed to The Catalogue of Boston of Bury. "John Boston of Bury St. Edmunds," the examination of which will show that during the Revival that system of invention was begun which we have so long confounded with records of past events in our land.

The Catalogue, like so much else of the first importance on this subject, was not printed until the 18th century, in the "Bibliotheca Britannico-Hibernica" of Bishop Tanner. There were then five MS. copies of it extant. So late as 1747 the editors of the excellent "Biographica Britannica" had not seen a copy, and complain that the work is still withheld from the public. Since its publication it has never been critically examined; otherwise the great illusion as to our early literature would long ago have been dispelled.

We have no reference to the monk of Bury and his Catalogue until the time of Bale and Pits. The silence of John Leland upon the matter is inexplicable; and all that can be fairly said upon the question of the date is that it must have been compiled at some time during the Revival of Letters. Let me assume, provisionally, that it may have been schemed during the period 1480-1520.

of Gms No 52

Boston's Catalogue is arranged on the alphabetical principle, a departure from the usual Benedictine method. A dictionary of writers, in the modern acceptation, it is evident that the compiler could not arrange it upon the chronological principle. The first recognition of this fact gives another shock to our preconceived notions. Here is a monk who points to no less than 197 religious houses in England where books are to be found. He is anxious to make out a complete list of them. Yet of famed writers who are supposed to have flourished from the time of "Gildas" and of "Bede," from the time of William the Conqueror or of Henri Beauclerc, Stephen or John, he has not yet discovered the date. He knows not their works. He has their names, and nothing more.

Incipient
libraries.

One of the devices of the Benedictines (as I have shown elsewhere) was to invent names of writers, with surnames which assigned them to various cloisters in their world. They were given out as "illustrious men," as "luminaries of the Church." So a Catalogue was sketched out and sent round to the leading monasteries. The names of the illustrious were inscribed. Then, lastly, their date was set down, and the various monks were employed to write Church romance under their names. Under such a system it was of no consequence in what monastery of the Order the works were really written. They formed a really anonymous and circulating library; nor was a monk ever permitted to enjoy the credit of his own production.

The structure of Boston's Catalogue reveals the operation of this system of fiction. At the first inspection many more books appear to be known in England than actually existed in the cloisters. But when we observe that against many

The method
of Benedic-
tine fiction.

names no copy of the work named is indicated, or the mere date of the writer has not been discovered, the collection reduces itself to something like a skeleton. It is as if a library had been ordered for England, but the books had not yet arrived, because they have not yet been written. In other cases, books are for the first time introduced to notice as if old which have been but recently written. An interesting example is the work known to students of early Christianity as the "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs."

"Robert Grostete, Bishop of Lincoln," is one of the fixed forms of Benedictine literary history. He is said to have "flourished" about the year 1250. Now, the book in question (says the monk of St. Edmunds) had long been unknown and hidden "through envy of the Jews." Jerome knew it not, no other Latin writer knew it until Grostete rendered it from Greek into Latin. Grostete is one of the allegorical names in which the Benedictines delight; and a mass of his writing has been referred to the thirteenth century which was produced at a later time. The work, says Boston, manifestly contains prophecies of the Saviour. In fact, it converts the Patriarchs of Jewish lore into Christian apostles, or, if you will, into monks.*

Nothing is understood of early English History until we see that it is a branch of Church History. Nothing is understood of Church History until we see that it is Benedictine History, and that Benedictine History is a branch of theological art. After all that has been said on this subject, a brief examination of the writers whose fables

* Chaps. 240 and 283 of Leland's "Commentaries" show how the legend of Greathead had grown during the reign of Henry VIII.

have given rise to so deep-seated illusions in reference to the English past may now be made.

It has been assumed that the Benedictine who writes under the *nom de plume* of "Gildas" lived in the sixth century; but on no other ground than that on which children and simple people believe this or that, "because they are told so," or "because it is so written." And yet, had a genuine sceptical habit set in among English scholars, it would long ago have been perceived that there is no reason whatever for entertaining such an opinion. When you can discover neither the personality of a man nor his place, you will fail to discover his epoch. That a solitary obscure monk should be sitting down in his cell in some retired spot of Britain, at Bangor, or wherever else you fix your conjecture, writing stories which there is not a reader to peruse, is an idea which may excuse a smile, even in the presence of grave believers.

This "Gildas" is a monk who has an admirable command of the Latin Bible, which no monk had or could have until the late fifteenth century. His writing is only one among a multitude of illustrations of the fact that the Benedictine literature—the most important of it—has been antedated by a full thousand years. It is the old story of the world resting on the elephant, the elephant on the tortoise, the tortoise on nothing. "Gildas" is certified by another solitary of three centuries later, Bede; Bede by William of Malmesbury, and so on. The system is perfectly intelligible, so soon as you insist on exact particulars of person, place, and time before you consent to use the work as evidence of fact.

This "Gildas" has a string of inventions about imaginary British kings, who were called into existence about the time when the greatness of the Tudor House

and the glories of King Arthur began to be spoken of. It is needless to waste the patience of the reader at this point by a long demonstration. A single hint may be given. For example, "Gildas" tells a sensational tale about one "Constantine, Tyrant of Damnonia."* But the very late Benedictine who poses as "Matthew of Westminster," and has been planted in the fourteenth century, produces the same story in a more concise form, which seems to contrast with the timid declamation of "Gildas," as the earlier and the later account of the same thing. On reference to the Catalogue of "Boston of Bury," we find that he has the name of "Gildas" on his list, but has not yet discovered when he "flourished." He names his work "De Gestis Britonum Historia," and says that it ended with the word *fecerunt*. But he indicates no copy of it in any library. One can only infer that the work or works ascribed to "Gildas" had been written quite late in the fifteenth century. Almost the first thing that Polydore Vergil discovered (1520) in searching for the materials of English History in the next age was a "forgery" set down to "Gildas." About the middle of the sixteenth century we find John Leland painfully labouring to discover a historical "Gildas." These scholars were too near the subject of study to detect the great Benedictine fraud.

It may now, at this distance of time, be clearly perceived that "Gildas" belongs to the same literary faction with the monks who pass under the names of "Bede" and "Alcuin." It is the two latter who agreed to recommend their collaborator as the "wisest of the Britons." St. Albans or Bury must have been possessed of the secret of all these compositions. They all evince the intention of the monks to write English History in

* "De Gest. Brit.," pt. 2, ep. 2.

illustration of Church principles; in other words, to embody what was dear to the ecclesiastical heart in the form of allegorical tales respecting British, Saxon, Norman, and Plantagenet kings.

In "Gildas" the Latin is not disagreeable to good taste, but the sentiment is affected, the rhetoric conventional, and fables violent, sensational, and therefore edifying to the popular mind. The stock phrases pall upon the jaded ear. You have heard it all before; Pseudo-Gildas echoes Pseudo-Jerome, his contemporary, when he calls Porphyry a "mad Oriental against the Church" and puts into his mouth the saying that "Britain is a province fertile of tyrants."

The work is clearly discovered to be part of the system of Ecclesiastical History. The object of the writer is to impress upon us the dogma that "Christ the Sun of Righteousness first indulged his rays to this icy cold island" in the late days of Tiberius. He insists on the theory of Diocletian's persecution. Britain had her full supply of holy martyrs, the places of whose passion and burial kindle the ardour of charity in our minds. There was St. Alban of Verulam, Aaron, Julius, and others. Dramatically he tells the tale of St. Alban, in whose cloister he was possibly writing.

He repeats the ecclesiastical principle, in accordance with which so much of Ecclesiastical History has been constructed, "There must be Hæresies." The Church is essentially combative; her orthodoxies and her heterodoxies always assume the form of persons. Therefore the perfidious Arians came over the ocean into Britain with deadly effect. He proceeds with his tales of tyrants, of devastations, of pestilences and the overthrow of cities. He finds these things in texts

from the psalms and prophets. At last peace is granted to the Israel in Britain.

He proceeds in the second part of his work with what he calls "Increpations," or, in plain English, with volleys of "strong language" levelled at the fantastic tyrants of Britain, a Constantine, an Amelius, a Vortiporius, a Cuneglassus, a Maglocunus. The windy sentences affect us as men are affected by violent and unanswerable pulpit declamation. Safely does the orator launch the thunderous oracles from the Hebrew Prophets against these crouching shades, while possibly English lords, magnates, satraps, sit listening in the presence of the populace, who gaze upon their countenances to see whether the arrows of conviction had gone home, and who exult in the protection which Mother Church affords the suffering English liberties. For it was one of the objects most anxiously pursued by the monks of the Order of St. Benedict, when they undertook the writing of English History, to represent that Order as the constant friend of the people in its struggles against the oppressions of the great.

With regard to the writer who passes under the name of "Nennius," a forgery was in this case discovered by John Leland quite analogous to that discovered in the case of "Gildas" by Polydore Vergil. Leland found in the Abbey of Eurevale in Yorkshire a MS. on British History ornamented with ridiculous fables. But he drew the same kind of inference that Polydore drew, that the manifest forgery implied the existence of the genuine article; and no doubt the inference was designed to be drawn.

We come again to Bede. I have not met with any professed critic who has ever asked the questions which are elementary in the critical

business in reference to Bede. Who vouches for his personality, his place, his epoch? These questions are no sooner asked than answered. Bede, whose name is allegoric of the idea of prayer, is one of the *figurants* in the Benedictine literary confederacy. When you examine the statements which he is supposed to make about himself at the end of the "Ecclesiastical History," when you find these statements copied, with slight variations, in the writings of other Benedictines planted in the "twelfth century," when you perceive that no scholar outside the Order knew anything of Bede until the sixteenth century—the critical problem is essentially solved.

The canonical principle laid down by the Benedictines is that no man should bear testimony, un-^{His self-}supported, of himself. But they constantly ^{testimony.} violate the principle. For the sole testimony to the existence of "Bede" in the eighteenth century is the testimony of "Bede" himself at the end of his "History." Before citing it, let me observe that the earlier copies of the work did not contain the last chapter. Polydore Vergil does not appear to have seen this last chapter, while Leland distinctly tells us that it was not to be found in any of the printed copies. On comparison with "Boston of Bury," it is remarkable that this monk evidently has seen the last book. No other conclusion can be drawn than that the following so-called self-testimony was not penned down, perhaps, until some time about the middle of the sixteenth century. The statement runs:—

"These on the Ecclesiastical History of Britain and chiefly of the Nation of the Angles, as far as I could ascertain, whether from the Letters of the Ancients, the Tradition of the Elders, or from my

own knowledge, with the help of the Lord, I have digested.—Bæda, servant of Christ, and priest of the monastery of the Blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, which is at Uiuremuda and Ingous (Wearmouth and Jarrow).

“Born in the territory of the same monastery (679), at the age of seven years, by the care of my relatives, I was given to be educated to the most reverend Abbot Benedict, and then to Ceolfrid; and passing all my lifetime thereafter in the habitation of the same monastery, I gave all labour to meditating the Scriptures; and between the observance of the regular discipline and daily care of singing in the church, I ever found it sweet either to learn, or to teach, or to write.

“In the nineteenth year of my life the diaconate (691), in the thirtieth the grade of the priesthood (702), both through the ministry of the most reverend Bishop John, at the command of Abbot Ceolfrid, I undertook.

“From the time I received the priesthood unto the fifty-ninth year of my age (731) these works on Holy Scripture for my own necessity and that of my friends from the opuscles of the venerable Fathers I have taken pains to annotate, or even to superadd to the form of their sense and interpretation.”

Then follows a list of works, and then the concluding words:—

“And Thee, I pray, good Jesus, that Thou in Thy kindness wilt grant to him to whom propitiously Thou didst give sweetly to draw from the words of Thy knowledge, that he may one day come to Thee, the Fount of all wisdom, and appear forever before Thy face.”

In the first place, it was impossible for a Benedictine to write Commentaries on the Books of the Old and the New Testament in the seventh and eighth centuries, simply because those books were not in existence. Yet it is pretended that more had been done at the remote monastery at the mouth of the Wear in those early times than in the cloister of St. Mary, Paris, 500 years after the stated time of Bede. Here, also, for the first time, we hear of the Opuscles of St. Augustine on "the Apostle," which, according to all the evidence attainable, were not known until the fifteenth century. Clearly, the name Bæda is merely the mask for the literary activity of the Benedictines in that later age.

It is, moreover, a brother Benedictine—Sigebert of Gemblours—who in his long Catalogue of 1711 names of ecclesiastical writers of the Order, supports the statement of the Pseudo-Bede by simply repeating it in his Catalogue. His words are—

Witness of
Sigebert,
dated c. 1100.

"Bede, the monk, by nation an Angle, himself opens in his own words, who or whence he was, what or how much he wrote." * Then comes the citation of the words above given, with the list of the works.

Boston of Bury also copies the list of Pseudo-Bede's works—not quite exactly, however—and says they are *from* his "History of the Angles." He also gives different closing words to the "Ecclesiastical History" from those in our text. He then adds a considerable number of works which are also said to be Bede's. With regard to Sigebert, Boston simply notes his name without ascribing any work to him. As Bede rests upon Sigebert, Sigebert rests on his own testimony.

Of John
Boston.

* Catalogue, c. 68.

Bede has been discovered the great luminary of the Church in England, and the greater part of the literature has been set down to him. But he is not yet the Venerable Bede, he is merely monk and priest of the venerable monastery at Wearmouth and Jarrow. It has been discovered that he flourished c. 706, and that he died in 734, at the age of fifty-nine. But the whole of his "Ecclesiastical History" has not been discovered as yet. Comparison of the Abbot of Spanheim's notice of him at the end of the fifteenth century, and of the notice in John Leland's "Commentaries" of the next age teaches us that the theory of the Venerable Bede and his writings was in a fluid state until some time in the sixteenth century.

Our historians since that time have been wont to build on the Church History of Bede, for the most part without examination of the evidence, although the shrewd Thomas Fuller, in the sceptical seventeenth century, scoffed freely at its fictions. But what was the state of historical speculation in England about the middle of the fifteenth century, when we consider that Of Polydore Vergil. Polydore Vergil, writing about the year 1530, had not seen the statement of the dates of Bede's birth and death. He merely says that Bede died in the reign of King Ceoloulph, to whom he dedicated his "History." He adds that Bede also wrote—

On the Acts of the Apostles ;

On the Gospel of Mark ;

On Times ;

Homilies frequently used, especially among the English ;

On VII. Canonical Epistles ;

On the Apocalypse ;

On Genesis ;

On Ezra ;

On the Books of Kings ; and

Many other missing Writings.

The following is the account of "Bede" given in Trithemius's * Catalogue, cap. 242 :—

"Bede, monk and priest of the Monastery of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, which is in England, of the Order of St. Benedict, a man most studious in the Divine Scriptures, and right learned, also most skilled in secular letters, philosopher, astronomer, calculator, and distinguished poet, not ignorant of Greek, of excellent ability, not nice in his style, but sweet and composed. He wrote many volumes in which the sharpness of his wit is shown. When he was seven years of age, by the care of his friends, he was handed over to Abbot Benedict to be educated, and then to Ceolfrid, of the said monastery of Muramutha (Wearmouth), and spending all the rest of his life thenceforward in the dwelling of the same monastery, he devoted himself to scriptural meditation ; and between the observance of regular discipline and the daily care of singing in the church, he found it sweet ever to be learning or teaching, or writing something. In the nineteenth year of his age he gained the decree of Deacon, in the thirtieth that of Priest, both by the ministry of Bishop John, at the bidding of Abbot Ceolfrid ; from which time of the accepted priesthood to the end of his life he composed the subjoined opuscles." There follows a list of no less than fifty-two treatises, chiefly commentaries on Biblical books. Trithemius then goes on—

"Many other things he also published, which have

* Trithemius, "De Scriptoribus Ecclesiæ—J. A. Fabricius, *Bibl. Eccles.*, 1718, p. 65.

not come to the notice of our reading. His opuscles, even while he was living and always writing new things, were of such authority that at the Ordination of Bishops of England they were publicly read in the churches. And when in the imposition of Homilies they wrote the name, after custom, of the author, the Venerable Bede, Priest, not being able to call him otherwise while he lived, the title once attributed in the beginning has obtained to the present day, so that he is called Bede the Venerable rather than Saint. For it was not allowed to call him otherwise while he lived (saint though he was). Some there are who invent other reasons of this title "Venerable"—from an inscription of an epitaph. Others dream that Bede was blind. They err, for Bede was not blind, nor do we know such an epitaph written on his tomb. Indeed, if I did not consult brevity, I could easily confute these ravings. He died in the emperor Leo's time, in the year of the Lord 732, in the Indiction XV., the year of his age seventy-two, the day before the Calends of June.*

The reader will observe that though the preface of Trithemius is dated 1492, this and many other articles could not have been written down till several decades later, as comparison with Leland and other bibliographers clearly shows.

John Leland witnesses to a still existing uncertainty as to the dates of Bede. He thinks—contrary to Trithemius—that he lived to the age of sixty. But all that Leland advances in support of his opinion is the statement Bede was fifty-nine when he finished his "History" and did not long survive. Leland has derived this from a MS., for he says expressly that in the printed copies the last chapter of

* Engelhusius' "Chronicle" gives the year 735, and his age fifty-nine.

the fifth book is always wanting. He also cites "William of Malmesbury" for the self-testimony. He appends a list of works ascribed to Bede, five or six times longer than that produced by Polydore some five years earlier. Yet he admits that many works were falsely ascribed to Bede. Notwithstanding this, he indulges himself in an outburst of idolatrous homage to the extraordinary learning of "Bede," who had now been placed on a pedestal, from which it would have been an outrage to remove him.

The name of "Bede," then, is a symbol of the literary activity of a knot of Benedictines who were told off to the duty of illustrating the imaginary past of England and the Northern Province. And the opportunity may be taken of insisting on a law which finds its application not only again and again in English history and literature, but in the broader field of the history of human culture. It is not that the known personality is the creation of a body of literature; it is that a body of writers, intent upon the cultivation of their own ideas, in history, in science or in dramatic art, create the ideal or idol personality, under whose patronage their work is to be carried on and bequeathed to posterity. Of this principle the tradition about "Bede" is a remarkable illustration. Further illustrations, equally important, will occur to us in the course of these studies.

I pause to remind the reader of the point at which we have hitherto arrived in the course of these investigations. The determination of the epoch of the composition of the "History" ascribed to Bede depends on the determination of the epoch of the beginning of the Benedictine literature, which again is the epoch of the Invention of Printing. The contents of the work

itself, carefully examined, show it to have been written near the same time with the first general Church History. But the work of "Bede" shows a much fuller acquaintance with the Bible, especially with the New Testament. When all the evidence that can be collected concerning the first appearance of the Bible in the cloisters has been considered, and the independent testimony of scholars like Polydore and Leland has been brought to bear on the earliest knowledge of the "Ecclesiastical History" of "Bede," it will be found impossible to assign to the latter work a higher antiquity than the latter decades of the fifteenth century. It was not known till the reign of Henry VIII., outside the monasteries, not *printed* till 1643, nor *criticised* in any adequate sense till it came into the hands of the admirable Thomas Fuller.

But of more general interest, perhaps, is the discovery that Boston of Bury indicates no copies of works which had been used during the last 300 years as sources for English History. Famous, for example, is the name of William of Malmesbury. Boston gives the following notice of him :—

“ William of Malmesbury, a monk, flourished circa A.C. . . ., and wrote “De Gestis Regum Angliæ” lib. v., “De Gestis Pontificum.” He has heard the name of William, but knows not—though he is theoretically 300 years later than William—his epoch, and is ignorant of a single copy of his works in England.* In like manner he has heard of Ralph de Diceto and his “Imagines Historiarum.” This writer is said to have been Dean of St. Paul’s early in the thirteenth

English History schemed, but not written.

“ William of Malmesbury.”

Ralph de Diceto.

* Cf. Leland “Comm,” c. 166, who can enumerate fourteen works.

century ; * but Boston, who has visited St. Paul's, names no copy of the book.

In like manner, a number of chroniclers who have been referred to the age 1200-1300, and have been used for historical purposes, are unknown to our Bury monk. Among these are Walter Mapes, Gervase of Dover, Benedict of Peterboro', Roger of Hoveden, Roger of Wendover. One copy of the work of William of Newburgh is indicated. The name of Gervase of Tilbury and of his work "De Solatt. Imperii" is given, but *no* copy of it is indicated. Four copies of the "History of the Kings of England" by "Henry of Huntingdon" are indicated. But Simeon of Durham, John and Richard of Hexham, Ailred of Rievaulx, John of Brompton, are conspicuous by absence.

Supposed
thirteenth-
century
writers.

And what of the eminent historian of Magna Carta? What of Matthew Paris? Surely this luminary of St. Albans and of England in the thirteenth century must be known both at St. Alban's and at Bury in the middle of the fifteenth. Not so. Boston has not found any work of Matthew Paris either at St. Alban's or in any other English cloister. He has but discovered his name, and the fact that he wrote an historical work, but no more. He says: "Matthew Paris flourished about the year of Christ . . ., and wrote a History or Book of Chronicles." That is all. Paris is advertised before his work appears.†

Matthew
Paris un-
known.

Equally ignorant is the monk of St. Edmund's of works theoretically ascribed to the late fourteenth

* Leland says he was "about 400 years" before his time.

† Cf. Leland, "Comm.," c. 249, who is aware of his fame and his "History."

century. He knows nothing of the work ascribed to
 “Richard of Hexham” on the Archbishops
 of York, nothing of what has been called the
 “Plagiate from Richard” by Thomas Stubbs,
 who is said to have “flourished” A.D. 1373.
 To talk, indeed, of Plagiaries in such connection is
 sheer misunderstanding of the nature of Benedictine
 literature. The same matter is put under the names of
 Hexham and of Stubbs in order to secure a show of
 antiquity. The merits of William Thorn of Canterbury,
 dated about 1380,* and of Henry Knighton,† canon of
 Leicester c. 1395, have not yet been displayed to the
 religious world.

The danger is rather of understating than of over-
 stating the profundity of English ignorance on the
 evidence of this Catalogue. Take away from it the
 Commentaries on Scripture and works of devotion, and
 there is scarce anything left.

There were to be found only about seven copies of
 Bede’s “History” in the whole island, about six copies of
 a work on General Geography, and of another on the
 Holy Places and site of Jerusalem. The truth is simply
 that in England neither geography nor history was
 understood at this time by the monks themselves.
 They were merely taught a dogmatic theory of the
 world from the Old Testament, which was swiftly over-
 thrown by the discovery of the New World in the
 West.

The telling of Winter’s Nights’ Tales was no doubt
 going on; but the literary Romance of King Arthur,
 which grew up side by side with Church Romance,
 cannot be traced much higher than John Lydgate,
 himself said to have been another monk of St. Edmunds.

* Leland, c. 410.

† Ibid., c. 429.

In illustration of this point it may be mentioned that Boston names the "Golden History of John of Tynemouth" (who was later said to have flourished in 1366). This is no doubt one of the earliest attempts at Church Romance. It consists of "*diverse stories and events in the world from the Creation down to the time of King Edward.*" Four copies of the "Golden History" only are indicated: one was at Bury, the others at St. Albans, Spalding, and Tynemouth.

One more illustration of the hollowness of this skeleton Catalogue may be given. Thomas of Aquino may long have been honoured by Benedictines and Dominicans in England before they had read a line under his name; but Wolsey seems to be the first eminent man outside the cloisters who is designated a Thomist.

Now, in Boston's Catalogue the mere name of Thomas de Aquino is set down. But he tells us of one Robert de Oxford, a Dominican, who, we learn from other brethren, wrote about 1340 against the Benedictine Henry of Ghent, the latter having attacked the Angelic Doctor. This clue carries us to the School of Paris, where, according to tradition, there was great trouble with the Mendicants from the thirteenth century, and where the beginnings of intellectual activity appear to be signalized by censures of Mendicant scholars at the end of the fourteenth century. Boston has heard some rumour of these things. But why in the world is he silent about Johannes Vicoclivus, *alias* Wiclif, and that detestable Lollardry amidst which he ought to be living? St. Albans may atone for this silence.

Supposing the Catalogue of Boston of Bury to have

been compiled late in the fifteenth century, it shows that at that time Bury was the chief literary centre in

England, while St. Albans lagged behind it. For only a very few books are set down to the credit of that cloister. The evidence which comes from St. Albans itself by no means lessens the impression of intellectual penalty, even in the palmy days of the great literary abbot, Joannes Frumentarius, otherwise John of Wheathamstead.

The genesis of the ideal of this Benedictine luminary may be traced with tolerable accuracy. It corresponds in outline to that of the still more brilliant literary Abbot of Spanheim, John of Tritenheim, commonly called Trithemius. At some time late in the fifteenth century or early in the sixteenth, it was thought desirable to represent a state of flourishing culture at St. Albans under the symbol of a flourishing name. The village of Wheathamstead supplied that name. The monks, perpetrating a wretched pun, convert John of that place into Joannes Frumentarius. Not content with this master-stroke, they proceed to write a work under his name, which, punning a second time, they call his "Granary." Those who are familiar with these writings of the Order will be aware that the monks think as highly of the art of punning as the Jews of the Cabbala. The canonical writings are not exempt from this folly.

It is impossible to praise either the quantity or the quality of the corn in the Granary of the wheaty Abbot of St. Albans. The book—extant in MS. in the Cotton Library—consists of two parts, and may be described as a first effort towards the production of a Classical, Mythological, and Ecclesiastical Dictionary.

Another title of the work describes its contents as "historiographic historical."

The first name is that of "Abgarus of Edessa." Few readers are perhaps aware of the importance in a critical aspect of the legend ^{Abgarus.} of the interchange of letters between Jesus and this king Augarus, Abgarus, or Abagarus of Edessa. It is given at great length in the first Church History ascribed to Eusebius of Cæsarea. Indeed, that flimsy system of fables, in which there are but a few lines correspondent to anything in the New Testament, contains no narrative about Jesus so circumstantial as this. It must either be older than or coæval with canonical narratives. But the exclusive attention which has been gradually fixed on the New Testament since the Reformation has thrust this and a mass of other myths of Jesus into the background.

At St. Albans, then, at this late period, the monks are beginning to be acquainted with that system of Fable which they are pleased to call Church History. And what their notions on the subject were may be gleaned from various handbills in the "Granary," from the articles on *Antichrist*, on *Basil the Great*, on the *Church*, and on *Ecclesiastical History*, on *Faith*, *Heresy*, and the like. The theory about "Bede" is not yet fixed. He is described as "priest and monk of the monastery of Jarrow, or, as others say, of Wearmouth." He has not yet attained to the honours of Venerability.

It seems that now, about a hundred years after his conventional date, *John Wyclif* (or *Vicoctivus* ^{John Wiclif.} in Latin) is beginning his career. He is described as "a man of all men the most wicked," and his very name is expressive of the fact. All the labours of scholars in recent years have not enabled us to get

beyond this notice of Wiclif in the "Granary" of St. Albans. Is it not time to say, with the view of saving further expense of vain toil, that neither John Wiclif nor the other man of the same name is to be considered a historic personality? The name, as in a multitude of other cases, is a convenient figure of the poor priests at which the monks and friars discharge their polemical arrows, a foil to their own orthodox opinions.

It seems that the Latin classics are beginning to be read, or at least talked about, in St. Albans. Tacitus. Tacitus is called, after the monk who writes under the name "Tertullian," "the most chattering of liars," and reference is made to his account of the Jews as if they were Egyptians, *gens Egipeia*. The works ascribed to Josephus do not appear to be known, but there is a fable about Jesus, son of Ananias. There is an article on *Joseph of Arimathæa*, and how he came to Britain. The stock fables about Roman emperors and about Charles the Great are adopted.

The "Granary" is simply another exposure of disgraceful ignorance, passionate hatred of the light which is coming in to England, and desperate determination and falsehood as the only means of saving a false system. As if to complete the exposure, it is said of John of Wheathamstead, as of Trithemius, that his monks caballed against him because he expended too much on literature, and neglected their temporal interests. Was it the object of the Benedictines at the time of Printing and the Reformation to pretend that much more would have been done in the monasteries in the way of literary culture, had it not been for the stupidity and sensuality of the mass of the monks? The truth is, that culture was forced upon the cloisters by the growing curiosity of the world.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

THE INVENTION OF ENGLISH HISTORY—POLYDORE
VERGIL.

IF I have at all succeeded, by means of the foregoing illustrations, in indicating what the state of English imagination and English knowledge was at the end of the fifteenth century, the reader will be prepared for the conclusion which can be made clear on other grounds, that what we call early English History is the poetic invention of the Tudor period.

Englishmen were from the first too near to the subject, and too infatuated by national vanity, to admit this plain fact. It so happens, however, that two foreigners can be cited, who naturally approached the subject in a calmer mood and from a distance, whence the truth could be more clearly discerned.

The first is Chalcondylas, one of the writers in the so-called Byzantine series of chroniclers. Chalcondylas is a dry and poor writer. He ^{Chalcondylas.} was an Athenian, an officer of the Duke of Athens, and is believed to have been living quite late in the fifteenth century. He is conversant with the Mohammedans, and gives a reverent and fair account of their religious beliefs. He is another witness to the fact that they were the true people of culture of his time. He sets

down the little he knows about the West in the spirit of a Mohammedan. He knows nothing of Christians, but employs the term "Nazaræans" as the Moslem designation of heretics. The Nazaræans are in his thought a military confederation, who have settlements in Rhodes, in Spain, in Prussia. He has heard some tale about the wizard Joachim, the Calabrian abbot, an ideal of the monks. There is nothing extraordinary in the Greek's ignorance nor his apathy, in the light of the general evidence I have reviewed. He is not a violent fabulist; but he could be imposed upon by idle travellers' tales from the West. Possibly he has read, more probably he has listened to some French romancers.

Chalcondylas draws a faint picture of Britain and its institutions, and the passage to which attention may be particularly called shall be cited from Gibbon's rendering. "Their language bears no affinity to the idioms of the Continent; in the habits of domestic life they are not easily distinguished from their neighbours of France; but the most singular circumstance of their manner is their disregard of conjugal honour and of female chastity. In their mutual visits, as the first act of hospitality, the guest is welcomed in the embraces of their wives and daughters; among friends they are lent and borrowed without shame; nor are the islanders offended at this strange commerce and its inevitable consequences."

Let me bring into emphasis the following comment of Gibbon, because it is a criticism upon his own work, and upon much beside that has fallen from the pens of modern English historians. "Informed," says Gibbon, "as we are of the customs of old England, and assured of the virtue of our mothers, we may smile at the credulity or resent

Gibbon's
"Canon of
Criticism."

the injustice of the Greek, who must have confounded a modest salute with a criminal embrace. But his credulity and injustice may teach an important lesson : *to distrust the accounts of foreign and remote nations, and to suspend our belief of every tale that deviates from the laws of nature and the character of man.*"

Yet the name of Chalcondylas reminded Gibbon of the revival of learning at the same period under the teaching of Greeks in Italy. Gibbon had in fact arrived, very late in the progress of his work, at the point where the critical study of his materials should have begun. He supposed that histories of Britain had been current for near 1000 years before Chalcondylas. He was profoundly mistaken.

If this witness of ignorance on the part of the Greek stood alone and isolated, it might be explained away. On the contrary, it is confirmed Polydore Virgil in England. beyond contradiction by an Italian scholar from the court of the Pope, who came to England a little later, at a time when the Italian scholars were dispersed in the West. I refer to Polydore Virgil. This scholar tells Englishmen, in the plainest terms, that nothing was known by educated foreigners of their history.

I have before me the Basle edition of the "Anglica Historia" of Polydore, dated 1570. On the title-page are some lines from the pen of Simon Grynæus, flattering the martial renown of England, and advertising the work as a fine poetic recital of her glorious deeds during the space of no less than 1900 years. The "Latian trumpet" of Polydore's style is duly belauded. In faith, a mocking and most ironical advertisement !

The dedicatory epistle to King Henry VIII. is dated

from London in August, 1533. Polydore conceives that he has accomplished a very important work. After speaking of History, in the fashion of the time, as a great means of moral education, he insists that History is the one thing lacking to the glory of Henry's name. So great, he continues, is the general ignorance of the greatness of England, there is scarce a work extant which gives information as to the nature of the soil, the origin of the nation, the manners of kings, the life of the people, the causes of the growth of the empire.

History and morality.

Ignorance of England.

There was, indeed, Gildas, and there was Bede; there had been later obscure writers. Annalists had lately begun their crude attempts to record passing events. But those writers were as "meat without salt." They had, however, supplied Polydore with some materials, which he has compared with foreign annals. He has been busy for a long time with the composition of this new History, which he now offers to the public in a polished and ornate form. He is well aware that it will not be immediately acceptable to Englishmen, who have been given to credit the dreamy tales of their grandfathers. If these tales be omitted, good heavens! how will the people lash the author with their tongues! The words were prophetic of the treatment Polydore actually received at the hands of some of our most learned men.

Credulity of Englishmen.

Before passing on, let me call the person of Polydore as distinctly as I can before the reader. He was quite a young man at the end of the fifteenth century; he had imbibed the best classical culture of his time; and, from his knowledge of the state of affairs, is one of our best witnesses as to the rise of the art of History in the West, and the condition of the popular mind to which

it appealed. Like all his contemporaries, he is vague in his dates for the times within his own knowledge, but in speaking of the reign of Henry VII. he says—

“In those times Perfect Letters (or correct classical learning), both Latin and Greek, were cast out of the bounds of Italy by wicked wars. Learning in the West.

They poured over the whole of Germany, Gaul, England, and Scotland. The Germans, having been the most illiterate, are now the most learned of all.” After an enthusiastic praise of Letters as the means of immortality, he proceeds to associate their rise in England, like a good courtier, with the name of Margaret, the most holy mother of King Henry, and the exhortations of John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, a man of the highest learning and character. Two magnificent churches were built at Cambridge, with two colleges of disciples, one dedicated to Christ Saviour, the other to St. John the Evangelist. A little before, John Alcock, bishop of Ely, had founded Jesus College. Then William Smyth, bishop of Lincoln, after the example of Margaret, founded Brasyn Nose College at Oxford, so called from the image fixed before the doors. Richard, bishop of Winton, founded Corpus Christi.

There follows the story of John Colet, “Dean, as they call him, of St. Paul’s.” In England he passes for a second Apostle Paul, having John Colet, and St. Paul. chosen him for his master. Educated at Oxon, and Cambridge, and in Italy, he began to read the Pauline Epistles in London upon his return, and often to preach in the temples. Sole survivor of a family of twenty-two sons, he was heir to his father’s property. He loved his fellow-citizens, but thought they would be improved by a little learning. So he founded the splendid school on the east side of St. Paul’s Churchyard,

and appointed William Lily, who had studied in Italy, first master. Lily was, indeed, first of Englishmen to teach the Classics in England. Before him Cornelius Vitellius, the Italian, of Corneto, in Tuscany, had been the first teacher of "good Letters" at Oxford.

It is impossible, I think, to bring this passage into too great emphasis. It distinctly teaches that literary culture was not beginning in England, whether at Oxford, Cambridge, or London, until the Tudor time. I would remind that the exact year of the foundation of St. Paul's School has never been discovered, still less that of any earlier learned foundations in England. The Italian scholar cannot be contradicted; he is decisively confirmed from every other available genuine source. The tales he writes down about British culture in distant times he has copied, as we shall see, from the historians of the great Benedictine collaboration.

Polydore came hither as collector of Papal dues, or Peter's Pence, appearing early in the reign of Henry VIII. He made himself acceptable in England, and was preferred to the archdeaconry of Wells, an office in which he expresses a modest pride. In his personal tastes Polydore was, before everything, the man of Letters. It was with him, as with the Humanists in general, a religion to cultivate that good Latin (along with a little Greek) which had come into England shortly before his arrival. If he does not write pure Ciceronian, his style is very careful. He knows the contents of the Latin Classics well; and it is probable that if he ever preached he mingled good moral sayings from Cicero with passages from the Sermon on the Mount. He shows no particular interest in theology. A decorous conventional Churchman, of easy temper, he seems to have passed through an agitated time without trouble. He disappears from

our view under Edward VI., who grants him permission in his old age to visit his native Italy.

As a critic, Polydore takes a line of his own, and steers between the extremes of gross credulity on the one hand and radical criticism on the other. His works show him to have been acquainted with the outline of Church Story as told by "Eusebius" and the rest. He must have known of the sceptical opinions current at the Court of Leo X. ; and it is to me at least an almost certain inference that he held it in very lax belief, if, indeed, he held it at all. Had he been closely questioned about the matter, I believe he would have dismissed it with a smile and a wave of the hand, and some remark to the effect that the Church, like other institutions, must necessarily begin her story with gods and heroes ; and that if questions of origin were probed to the root, History could never be written at all.

He is a much better critic than any English writer of the time ; he should receive a long-delayed justice at our hands. Polydore is a witness who cannot be shaken, from the fact that literary culture was merely beginning with the Tudor period, that the Benedictine writers were just beginning to be known, that about the year 1521 and later, writers in England and Scotland were in the full swing of those habits of violent invention which Polydore vainly strove by a better judgment and example to check. I may now leave the Archdeacon of Wells to speak for himself.

In his first book Polydore proceeds to give an account of the geography of Britain, which is divided into Anglia and Scotia, and has four parts, inhabited respectively by the Angles, the Scots, the Welsh, and the Cornish, who differ from one another in language, manners, and customs. He

"Anglican
History,"
Book I.

proceeds with the same air of novelty to enumerate the English *convents* or counties, and the *pontifical jurisdictions*, or in Greek, *dioceses* of bishops. Ecclesiastical terms are given with the same freshness; and Polydore apologizes for the use of such a designation as "abbot" instead of "præfect of monks." He is a classical purist; but incidents like these are important evidence that the monastic vocabulary had not come into use incalculable decades before his time, and that Greek terms were new.

It will be unnecessary to detain the reader with Polydore's description of the island, in which he makes use of Tacitus, Pliny, and Ptolemy. He describes the Highlanders of Scotland, and says they speak Irish. The Scoti have only the Municipal, not the Civil Law, like England. They have great natural ability and considerable learning. The idle among them are content to boast of their high descent. The Welshmen—meaning in the German tongue "foreigners"—were so called by the invading Angles. The Britons lost their name and the kingdom at the same time. There was a theory that Welsh was partly a Trojan, partly a Greek dialect. In Cornwall, whose lead and tin mines are mentioned, the nation of Britons alone remains. Their origin was traced to Brittany, and they use a similar dialect, which has much in common with the Welsh. Polydore marvels that in one and the same island there should be such diversity of tongues. Ireland lies between Britain and Spain.

In his description of our climate and productions Polydore extols the English wool as the true "golden fleece:" the source of our wealth. He admires the greatness of that wealth, illustrated in the costly

Church vessels and in the articles of plate which are to be seen on the tables of men of even moderate fortune. England abounds in all kinds of cattle, except asses, mules, camels, and elephants. The great herds of oxen wander over the pastures almost without keeper, there being no poisonous or rapacious animals except the fox. On the whole, it is the rustic England we all know which Polydore describes, allowing for the smallness of population and the backwardness of agriculture.

The English of the upper classes, he says, differ little in manners from the Italians. They are kind-hearted and hospitable to strangers. But the common people of the towns are of a rougher sort. They are first-rate bowmen and splendid warriors. There is also a great number of learned men now to be found in the island. The dress is like the French, and the ladies are remarkable for beauty and for becoming apparel.

According to "Gildas," Britain embraced Christian piety at the beginning of the Gospel. There follows an allusion to the tale of St. Gregory. There is, continues our witness, no more religious nation: as the fine temples, the frequent congregations, and the costly tombs of the saints demonstrate. So much by way of preface, before Polydore proceeds to narrate our wars, the principal occupation of the pens of the annalists of the time.

It is refreshing to read so sensible an introduction on turning from the daydreams of the monks. But disappointment soon replaces expectation as we proceed. Polydore, in search of sources, had found and published the first edition of "Gildas" in 1525. He had been unable to discover more than two copies of the work in the country. A second book, ascribed

The edition
of "Gildas."

to "Gildas" with the story of Brute, he strongly denounces as a forgery. The genuine Gildas and Bede are "very holy and very truthful men." On the other hand, there are authors of common repute, greater than they deserve, from the twelfth century, who have theories of the origin of the people different from those of the earlier writers. Polydore is induced to cling to Gildas, because William of Newburgh, who lived in 1195, bears testimony to him as an unbiassed writer. On the other hand, there is a ridiculous contriver of fiction recently come to light, who extols the virtue of the British over that of Macedonians and Romans with impudent vanity. This was Geoffrey, surnamed Arthur, "because he disguised in Latin colour and under the honest name of History many tales about Arthur, taken from old pigments of the Britons."

With still greater audacity this Geoffrey published the false divinations of one Merlin with additions of his own, as if they had been prophecies approved and resting on unshaken truth. It is a most remarkable circumstance that Polydore should write in this way for the delectation of his patron, King Henry, whose elder brother is said to have been named after the old British king, and whose father had come to the throne in accordance with the prophecies of Merlin. Did Polydore, in youthful ardour for truth, begin with the severity of a true critic, and under the pressure of general opinion end as a tame conformist to the fictions in vogue?

He proceeds to tell the story from the book he despises, of how Brutus, the son of Sylvius, the son of Ascanius, the son of Æneas, came into Aquitaine, thence to Britain, where he overcame the giants who then tenanted the island, and called it after himself,

Geoffrey
Arthur of
Monmouth.

The story of
Brutus.

“Britain.” But what, he asks, did Livy or Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and many other Roman writers know of this Brutus? Nothing at all. Besides, does not “Gildas” say that all books had long ago perished, and was he not writing about the year 580? Polydore, referring to the fine preface of Livy, well understands how the pleasing and plausible fable of Brutus should have obtained currency. He goes on to refer to Henry of Huntingdon and the author of “Polychronicon” as continuators of the tradition.

He offers some sensible remarks on the question of our national origin. Our white cliffs have always been visible from the French shore. Hence, possibly, the isle was called Albion.

The yearning for antiquity.

It must always have had inhabitants; it must have been peopled at the same time with other lands and in the same way; not by a fugitive or criminal from Spain, Germany, Gaul, or Italy. He leans upon the Semitic tradition; he thinks the isle may have been peopled after the flood of Noe. So “Gildas” also thinks. Such an origin is glorious enough to satisfy national vanity. Polydore alludes to the foible of the time—without the recollection of which History cannot be understood—which measures nobility “*by length of time and other gifts of mere fortune.*” If the indigenes of Latium boasted of a long reign in their land, so may the British aborigines rely upon a like monument of eternal glory.

After all this discussion, and after renewed complaints of the utter obscurity of the subject, Polydore at last seems to give up criticism in sheer weakness and despair. He must, it seems, run through the Lines of Kings as contained in the recent revelations of “Geoffrey Arthur,” where they appear to have come into existence

at a single birth. "*We will do this,*" he says, "*and that with impatience, partly because we want a Chronology, and partly because we must deprecate ill-feeling. We shall try at the same time to tear out the mistakes, and they are infinite.*" He then starts at last upon his road, beginning with Brutus, or Brito, briefly narrating the tales of his posterity, as they were to be repeated and learned by heart in our schools or dramatized upon our stages for more than a hundred years.

We might do injustice to the taste of Polydore were we not to bear in mind that no great national playwright had arisen in his time to amplify the tragic tale of King Leyre, eponymous hero of Leicester, and his daughter Cordilla, or the equally tragic legend of Ferrex and Porrex. They were to him tiresome myths constructed on the same principle with the old myths of Greek and Roman cities. Moreover, with all the desire for precision of statement which is evidently congenial to his mind, Polydore becomes hopelessly bewildered in

the attempt to make a Chronology out of these tales of British kings. He says that Brutus, or Brito, came, according to the story in the Benedictines, to Britain in the 4100th year of the world. Seven hundred and ten years later, according to Eusebius' "Epitome," Rome was taken by the Gauls under Brennus. But Brennus, according to recent writers in England, flourished here about 400 years after the advent of Brutus. There is a discrepancy of 310 years. Yet Polydore does not infer that he is in the hands of clumsy schemers.

But let us be charmed with their artistic work, and throwing ourselves into warm sympathy with our ancestors, delight in the picture of the good King

The necessity of a royal succession and a chronological scheme.

British Chronology hopeless.

Molmucius, the legislator on the right of Highways, and again in that of the beautiful and wise Queen Martia, wife of Gurtolin, who inaugurated an era of liberty, and gave her people the Martian Laws. King Lud again! the restorer of London, and builder of the western gate which bears his name. Why could not the Italian precision allow our ancestors to regale themselves with the memory of King Lud? Why will he intrude the remark that no serious author older than Tacitus has any mention of London? Why will he parade his Cæsar and his Strabo, and his Ptolemy, and his Pliny, and remind us that they knew nothing of Canterbury, Bath, Carlisle, or Leicester?

After the series of sixty-eight British kings has been exhausted, Polydore proceeds to narrate the conquest of Julius Cæsar. He says that Britain was conquered about the sixtieth year before Christ. King Cymbeline is reported to have served under Augustus; and in his reign Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary. Advancing from this point, our author is again in difficulties, owing to the reckless and discrepant statements of his authorities, whose age and genuineness he has not ascertained. For example, after finding mention of the British prince Arviragus in the time of Nero, Polydore reads the Benedictine tale that Joseph of Arimathæa came hither with a large following at that time. He finds in the Evangelist Matthew the statement that Joseph was of Arimathæa, and appears to consider this a confirmation of the tale which rooted itself at the splendid cloister of St. Benedict at Glastonbury, on which he often gazed. He is aware, however, that the tale of the great Christian King Lucius is of recent origin.

Julius
Cæsar.

Cymbeline.

Arviragus.
Joseph of
Arimathæa.

Lucius.

So entirely unconscious is he of chronological critique, he mentions that some assign to King Lucius (of the second century) the Church of St. Peter Westminster. at Westminster. But others assign it to Sibert, King of the East Saxons. Westminster is famed for the tombs of kings, the Royal Palace, the cœnobium of the Benedictines, and the Church of St. Stephen. Here is an asylum for criminals, and a Court of Justice. In an old anonymous MS. Polydore has read that the place was once surrounded with water, and called the Isle of Thorns. What with the criminals and the crowd of servitors, the name seems appropriate to the piercing "goads of their vices!"

Polydore himself repeats the tale of Diocletian's persecution in the next age, and of the martyrdom of St. Alban. He says the monastery of St. Alban's is by far the most celebrated of the Order of St. Benedict. But he says nothing of its literature, nor did he suspect that his "Gildas" came from that cloister. He sketches the usual Church tales of Constantine and Helena, and of the Invention of the Cross. His whole manner of dealing with these matters hints that the Benedictine literature is only just beginning to be generally perused. But passing by these and other stale matters, in which he seems to feel little interest, we come to an incident in Polydore's own literary experience which he narrates with perfect candour and *insouciance*, but which casts a sudden light upon the impostures in the name of History that were being contrived, so to say, under the very nose of Polydore.

There were monks and canons busily engaged at the same time in constructing a mythology for Scotland that should gratify the people, especially as a plausible invention in Biblical

Scottish
legend is
being
written.

and classical tradition. The name of Gavin Douglas, bishop of Dunkeld, figures in our literature, however dimly. But here for a moment he emerges into the daylight as a forger or patron of forgers, to disappear into the mist again for ever. Let us listen to the naïve story of Polydore.

Gavin came to England in the year 1521, "I know not why," says Polydore. He was a man of the highest nobility and virtue. "He heard that I had long been busily writing History, and he called on me. We became friends. Presently he earnestly begged me not to make use of the 'History' shortly before published by one of his countrymen, when I came to deal with Scotch affairs. He promised that in the course of a few days he would send me a little note-book, which I ought to make careful use of. And he did so."

In this precious "Commentariole" Polydore found the following "very ancient" origin of the nation. Gathelus was the son of Neolus, King of the Athenians. Fleeing the harsh rule of his father, he repaired to Egypt, and helped Pharaoh—the Pharaoh to whom Moses had been sent—against the Ethiopians. In return for these services, Pharaoh bestowed on Gathelus his daughter Scota. Gathelus, seeking a new seat, came to Spain, which he took possession of, and which was afterwards called Portugallia after him—that is, Port of Gathelus! He called his people Scots, after Scota. Three hundred years later, the Scots, under King Simon Brech, went to Ireland and founded a new kingdom there. At last, before the Advent of Christ, they repaired to Albion. Soon after, the Picts came into Albion from Scythia, and these two foreign nations propagated themselves in the part now called Scotia.

Gavin
Douglas.

Origin of
the Scotch.

They warred with Britons and Romans, and were never overcome. In the end, however, King Rentha was unfortunate with the Britons, fled his country into Ireland, and returning with an Irish force, regained possession of his pristine seat. All this was before the Advent of Christ.

“I,” says Polydore, “when I read these things, seemed to behold the she-bear bringing forth, as the proverb runs. And on Gavin’s asking for my opinion of the book, I replied that I would not dispute the origin, *because it was a popular custom to seek origins from gods or heroes.* The consequence was that really thoughtful people in their search for origins found it difficult to trace out anything certain, *and were forced to believe rather than to toil any more in vain.* But in point of fact,” continued our Italian scholar, “I can by no means make out how these two powerful peoples, the Picts and Scots, should have reigned so long and carried on so many wars with Britons and Romans, and yet there is no old and serious author who mentions them.” Cæsar, Tacitus, Ptolemy, Pliny, and others, make mention of the peoples of Britain, but not of Picts and Scots, because those names were not known in Britain. It is “more recent” writers who have “very lately” made mention of them. Polydore, in conclusion, told Gavin with great friendliness, but with great regard to truth, that he could not admit any advent of Picts and Scots into Britain before that related by “Bede.” He was, he says, bound by the Ciceronian law for the historian *Ne quid falsi*, etc. “The good honest Gavin heartily agreed with me, as reason agrees with truth. So easy is it ever to distinguish truth from fiction!” Gavin died that year of the plague. Scottish story, then, was being planned

Polydore as
critic of
Scottish
story.

and written upon the like system as English story during the reign of Henry VIII. The monks and canons employed their false etymological key, and derived the Scots from Scythia; and explained the identity of the language with Ireland and Scotland by the theory of wanderings, precisely as in the old Greek mythology. They set their fancy to write upon the royal ensign of the Red Lion, and assigned its origin to a distant Fergus, then declared a line of kings from him, and so on. Gavin Douglas, in 1521, appears to allude to the Chronicle of "John Major," published the preceding year, and in which the system may be studied, as well as in the better known "Hector Boece."

The story of "Hector Boece" is part of the story of the Canons Regular of Aberdeen, and of King's College in that city, which is said to ^{Hector} _{Boece.} have been founded about the year 1500. Boece is said to have been one of those canons, and all the particulars offered us concerning him, late as they are in date, point to the rise of learning in Scotland in his time. Scholars were beginning, in accord with the fashion of historic fabrication, to make out lists of the Bishops of Aberdeen in the interests of Episcopacy in general, and to forge charters and grants, also in accord with the fashion of the time. The "Lives," published at Paris in 1522, are a very clumsy performance. They begin with Beanus, and end with the contemporary Gavin Douglas, whose name, as we have shown, has been used as that of a patron of other literature.

The so-called "History of Scotland" was published at Paris in 1526. It was later improved and continued till about 1550. Needless to give a long account of this work. It furnishes one more illustration of that wildness of fantasy, that weakness of judgment, that

impotence for observation of the world, which resulted from monastic education. The author delights in the physically marvellous and the morally impossible. He writes for an audience of easy belief, who could relish the tale of the goose-footed otter which struck down great oaks, and drove the fishermen into the trees. He declares himself to have been a witness of the impossible in Nature. He tells the tale of Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt, and how he sent ambassadors to Rentha, King of Scots, to explore the country, and how they were delighted to find in Scotland a land of the same language, manners, and government with their own. This charming patriotic romance found translators in Bellenden, archdeacon of Moray, 1536, and in Holinshed; it regaled Scottish and English readers during the same period that Geoffrey of Monmouth was so beloved a classic.

The object of the writer was, as usual, to make out a succession of kings from Fergus the First to Fergus the Second, and so onwards, and then to fill in his sketch with the colours of romantic poetry. He belongs to the same literary conspiracy with the writers who pass under the names of Fordon and Major, with whom in general he agrees, though he names them not. It is Boece who appears to have called into existence the order of Culdees in præ-Christian times. The work is a mass of absurdity, its only merit being the fair Latin style.

Yet it was very late before men ceased to praise and began to be conscious of the worthlessness of such a production. The critics began by denouncing Boece as a blockhead, and ended by suspecting that he was a forger. Some of their remarks are well worth quoting because they apply not only to Boece, but to the whole

historiographic tribe of monks and canons. Thus Bishop Lloyd of Worcester, in 1684, pertinently observes that Boece could invent "authors no less than stories." He personifies the Bishop of St. Alban's cloak, for example; and thus one "Amphibalus" is called into being. He quotes authors who did not exist, and ignores his real authority, Fordon.

Stillingfleet offers similar criticisms. Neither he nor Lloyd had made that wide induction of the literary evidence which would have enabled them to pronounce that these tricks were essential to the system of fabrication. Stillingfleet supposes that Boece had very meagre lists of kings before him; that he "made up" the rest, placed them under feigned names, as of Veremund, and then filled up their story, not from genuine sources, but from his own invention. The bishop writes cautiously; but it is easy to perceive that had he pursued his critical inquiries into our literature, he might have laid bare the historical imposture to the root. When he calls Boece the "Geoffrey of Scotland" he has unconsciously indicated the true age of the Geoffrey, as a contemporary of Boece.

The illumination of Lloyd and Stillingfleet was, however, hateful to the foolish majority. In 1685 Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh made a bitter attack upon Lloyd, because Lloyd had cruelly cut off forty-four kings, and had pilloried as forgers the many and grave Scotch historians. Was it not a species of high treason to injure and shorten in this way the Royal Line? It was in defence of his brother bishop that Stillingfleet wrote the preface to which reference has just been made. Lloyd the antiquary declared the lies in Hector's "History" to be as numerous as the

waves of the sea or the stars of heaven. The book is of accidental interest to us because it supplied Shakespeare with the story of Macbeth.

Incidentally it should be noted that the narrative of the more plausible "Bede" was not accepted, even so late as 1520, in Scotland. There was a rumour about him; but "Hector Boece" pretends that he studied in Italy, lived at Melrose, and died at Durham: for which he is soundly rated by John Leland, writing about 1540. But now to return to Polydore Vergil.

CHAPTER II.

POLYDORE VERGIL—*continued.*

AFTER narrating the arrival of the Saxons under the allegorical Hengst and Horsa, Polydore again confesses his difficulty in discovering the truth from the differing accounts of his authorities. To Bede and Gildas he now adds the name of "Paul the Deacon," the Benedictine of Monte Cassino, another member of the same family of mythologists, who vouch for the Pelagian heresy; which is nothing but one of the articles of their Theological Syllabus presented in dramatic form. They warn us by the example of the wicked Pelagius against the error of supposing that man can of his own effort attain salvation or be born without original sin, and so be independent of Baptism. For to deny the need of sacraments is to deny the need of the priesthood. Again: the actual connection between the Benedictines of France and of England is represented in the legend of St. Germain and St. Lupus of Troyes coming on a mission into England. St. Serf, who was beginning to be celebrated by Scottish poets in Polydore's time, goes to the Orkneys. Polydore, of whose self-complacent scepticism we have just seen an example, exhibits his self-complacent credulity in following "Gildas" in the description of the battle scenes of the year 492.

"Anglica
Historia,"
Lib. III.
The Saxons;
Hengst and
Horsa.

Paulus
Diaconus.

He compares King Arthur to Roland, the relative of Charles the Great, whose fame was sung in Italy, and had reached the ears of Chalcondylas. But Polydore is unpardonably cold to Arthur, whose praises are the theme of vulgar declamation, and whose splendid tomb had, a few years ago, been placed in the cloister of Glastonbury. Yet Polydore adds that the Cœnobium did not exist in the time of Arthur. At last we arrive, at the end of sixty-two pages, at the fall of the British Empire, which our author compares to that of the Assyrians, Medes, Persians, Macedonians, and Romans. Yet as Troy was succeeded by Alba and Rome, so the British was succeeded by the English Empire.

Fall of the
British
Empire.

We now briefly pass in review the Annals of the Heptarchy. The mission of the monks Augustine and Miletus to Britain by St. Gregory is dated in the year 603. Polydore recites the usual Benedictine tale, without the pun on *Angles* and *Angels*, which he either has not read, or does not appreciate. He is very slight in his reference to those "indecent and ridiculous tales," as Hume calls them concerning the ecclesiastical state of women, which are more fully told in our "Bede." The explanation probably is that Polydore had but an early and meagre edition of the book. In narrating the death of Augustine, he is anxious to explain the words *sit* or *see* as applied to the rule of a bishop. He refers us to his work on "Inventors," where it has been shown that to *sit* is to "preside over sacred things and administer the Church." We are not to suppose that Polydore would employ "barbarisms" if he could avoid them. Similarly, *Chancellor*, *Abbot*, and *Prior* are unclassical terms; but long use justifies them. Sixty

Lib. iv.
The English
Empire.

The Episco-
pal See.

or seventy years, one may remark, would have been a very long time. Who can ignore the importance of such incidental evidence to the recency of the monastic literature?

Polydore admits, as a good Churchman, that many miracles are daily wrought through St. Augustine, "the Apostle of the English," as he is called. Hence he infers that his soul returned in joy to God our Father, and that he possesses his heavenly reward. He despatches briefly the tales of Kentish kings and bishops, and a short paragraph suffices for the South Saxons.

Of the East Angles, Sigebert founded the Gymnasium, or Boys' School, at Cambridge about the year 630. But Polydore does not name his source for this legend. It is another illustration of the dulness of observation toward the actual, and the facility of belief about the ideal, that he should say of the cloister of St. Benet at Croyland, "It is still a flourishing religious institution." He means that it is relatively old, and he can readily believe that it began to be celebrated about 695, because of the memory of St. Guthlac. He says that the body of St. Edmund still lies at Bury, in the cloister of the monks of St. Benet, and narrates, with some hesitation, the tale of the martyrdom and the discovery of the bleeding head by the awe-stricken Wolf, c. 871. The doubts of Polydore here arise from reading Saxo Grammaticus' account of the Danes, which will not square with the story of St. Edmund.

Polydore passes rapidly over the tales of the East Saxons and of the Mercians. He sketches the legend of Offa and his connection with the cloisters of St. Albans and of Bath, and the institution of Peter's Pence, c. 775. The glorification of Offa proceeds wholly

from the Benedictines, as also that of the holy martyr, St. Kenelm, at Winchelcombe.

An illustration of the inability of our author, with all his goodwill, to deal critically with the age of the cloisters which he visited, may be given from the Northumbrian legends. He has seen the fine minster of York, which is dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin. It was built, at some time unknown, by most excellent monks from Whitby. Some, however, assign the work to Alan, Earl of Richmond. He knows not the truth. Whitby Abbey had been "restored" by the Benedictines "a long time after" the Danish invasion. The nunnery there refers its origin to Oswey, the Mercian king. He recites the legend of Ely, founded by St. Augustine for the Benedictines (600) destroyed by Penda, restored by Etheldreda, again destroyed by the Danes (870), restored again in a few years. The present monks trace themselves back to Ethelwold, monk and bishop of Winton, who cast out a college of secular priests. This is but one of a mass of parallel Benedictine fictions.

They may be tiresome in their selfish monotony; but Polydore himself is interesting in relation to our present studies. Among the West Saxons he should be more at home, for he was often in residence at Wells. King Ina, he relates, after his warlike exploits against Kentishmen and East Saxons, resolved to "take up his Cross and follow Christ," or, in secular speech, to become a monk. In his wisdom, he considered it would be folly to commit his wealth to the care of another when he might best bestow it on religion. Therefore he built the magnificent cathedral of Wells, dedicated it to St. Andrews, made it the see of a bishop, and richly endowed it.

Now comes the autobiographical touch. "There flourishes at Wells in our memory a very celebrated college of priests, in which there are to be found continually men of good morals and great learning. I consider it a great personal honour that, fourteen years ago,* I became one of that College as Archdeacon of Wells, and that I exercise in the Diocese of Wells a jurisdiction which sometimes improves our character. In truth, as I have to labour to make others live well, I must of necessity lay down first the law to myself, that others may more rightly measure their way after that of their ruler." He proceeds to tell that it was Ina who founded and endowed the Benedictine convent of Glastonbury, which excels all others in hospitality and due monastic observances. He alludes again to the fame that Joseph of Arimathæa had built a small chapel there, and is of opinion that this was the reason for Ina's foundation. It was he who instituted the tax of Peter's Pence, and Offa followed his example.

Polydore
upon him-
self; Wells.

Polydore himself had been Collector of the Pence for some years, and on this business had first come to England. In following sentences he imparts a few more unconscious self-revelations. After relating the legend of St. Frideswide of Oxon, the holy virgin who, being offered violence by Lord Algar, fled into the town, while the gate closed on the pursuer, and he fell blind at the same moment, Polydore says the report ran that from that time the kings feared to enter Oxford. "So easily," he comments, "is the human mind carried away to superstition." "But," he continues, "I remember how Henry VIII. removed this scruple from men's minds.

Legend of
St. Frides-
wide.

* The year of his writing this is not clear, c. 1510?

Armed with a good conscience, he entered Oxford without any inconvenience, to the joy of the whole people. There is at this day a Convent of Regular Canons of St. Frideswide's at Oxon," he concludes.

The act of Henry VIII. may have had an educational influence at Oxford. But the authors of the "superstition" were the authors of the legend of the saint. What was Polydore's opinion of that and a multitude of similar legends? Were they credible? Were they part of History? We imagine his smile, his shrug: "We must believe something, otherwise we cannot write English History at all."

When Bede fails him, Polydore goes on with the Benedictine tale in its outline, seldom naming his authorities. His discussion of the Dacians, or Danes, reveals another system of fiction. He denounces "Saxo Grammaticus" as the first heretic who confounds the two peoples—that is to say, if Polydore had a correct copy of his work. He always calls those devastators "Daci." In his account of King Alfred, King Alfred he faithfully notes discrepancies in the tales concerning his coronation by Pope Hadrian II. or by Leo IV. He narrates the coming of Rollo the Dacian and first Duke of the Normans; the apparition of St. Cuthbert to Alfred in the guise of a poor man, the consequent donations to Chester and to Durham; the building of the splendid monasteries of Winton, of Shaftesbury, and, above all, of Athelney, for the monks of the family of St. Benedict, in memory of the comforting apparition (893).

Polydore repeats the tale of the literary achievements of Alfred: his translation of the Benedictine "Dialogues of St. Gregory," "Boethius," and the Psalms of David into English from

Lib. v.
The Daci,
or Danes.

King Alfred.

Alfred as
Church
writer.

the Latin. The Italian seems pleased with this tale, and rejects the version that a scholar—to wit, the bishop of Worcester—did some of the work at Alfred's request. The Psalms he left unfinished. But let the reader be reminded that it was only during Polydore's time that English people were beginning to read the Bible at all in the mother-tongue. The New Testament was young in the knowledge of the world; and Polydore has no difficulty in thinking of Alfred as one who made a "Royal Priesthood" of the clergy by encouraging holy and learned men. He does not observe the monkish artist in the picture of St. Neot, that most eminent monk at whose instigation the School at Oxford was founded.

But when you know how to read the Benedictine mythology, you will find in the following legend of Charlemagne and the scholar Alcuin, and the foundation of the Paris Academy and that at Pavia in Lombardy; and again in the legend of the two Irish or Scottish monks who went to Paris and to Pavia to sell learning for food and clothing, cases of "reversed migrations," so frequent in the old Greek mythology. The general truth is that Letters came hither from Italy and France in the latter part of the fifteenth century. To reverse the direction is one of the flattering falsehoods of the system. Polydore believes the tale because the Benedictines agreed in it, and there was no contradiction.

Turning his gaze on the Oxford of his time, he prepares the way, by some flowery compliments, for a severe censure on the bad example set to the boys by the lazy monks who are allowed to spend their useless lives in the place. He anticipates Gibbon. He says in effect to Englishmen: "You are going on with the building of colleges almost every day. You should fix

a term of study for the disciples, and at the end of it they should either go home learned men, or, like 'asses to the byre,' as the proverb runs, they should leave their places to others, who might profit in letters."

The boast of Cambridge is that she has never had unorthodox *alumni*. Not so splendid as Cambridge. Oxford, she is 265 years older. The town itself can be traced to the eponymous early Cambridge of the old British time. "But I return to History," says Polydore.

He is a charming guide. The conviction grows upon us that he does not intend to deceive; that he will not amuse at the expense of what he holds to be the truth. You may easily distinguish Polydore the observer of England from Polydore the student of MSS., the trickiness of which he, like excellent John Leland, was unable fully to detect and expose. Some one brought him a MS. which looked "very old," was said to be "very old," and was by him believed to be "very old." He looked into it and found some "very holy laws," ascribed to Alfred. Why does he withhold them? "Because," he answers, "they have so long been *forgotten* in England, there is no use in doing so." On the contrary, fame of the royal lawgivers—Alfred, Edward the Confessor, and the rest—is but beginning in England. It is not the languor of oblivion, but that of incipient fiction, which our good Polydore reflects. The young lawyers were just beginning their crude studies in the Inns of Court.

It is worth noticing that of Winton it is said the college of secular priests there was founded after Alfred's death, and that the monks displaced them. This, too, is part of the Benedictine system of coined precedents.

Pausing after the death of Alfred, Polydore shows

how English story conforms to the ages of man's life. The infancy of the English empire was under King Hengst, about 450. Its youth was during the reigns of the seven or eight kings to Egbert, who first brought in the names "England" and "the English"—a period of some 350 years. The age of manhood began from Egbert, and extended to St. Edmund the Martyr. Then our melancholy old age set in—the period of the Dacians and the Normans. Yet again this age, strange to say, passed into youth. The Norman name was changed into the English, little by little, and the people were generally called English. Such was the dogma of our History, in support of which a variety of fictions were conceived and written during, and later than, the time of Polydore.

He now enters the "Dark Age" of the Benedictine system, or the tenth century. His clue through this age is the Regal and Episcopal Lib. VI. Succession. A string of the names of the Archbishops of Canterbury will serve to remind that the electric current of grace has not ceased to flow in the benighted Isle.

We resume the tale of kings in this decrepit century. We read of Edward that, after he had freed the kingdom from the feud of the Dacians, he studied Legislation. But his salutary laws were easily "antiquated." This means that they were being contrived, in order to come to light in the time of Selden and Coke. Edward is supposed also to have built a fort at Bedford, "not a trace of which now remains in that village," adds Polydore. He gives reluctantly the monkish tales of the dream which announced the birth of Athelstan, from the lowly Edgina, the Moon which should illustrate England with its light. "You must satisfy the vulgar taste for prodigies," he says.

During this age Christian piety was chilled among the Western English, because they had no Bishop. Menaced by Pope John X., Edward, with Pleimund, archbishop of Canterbury, made a new batch of bishops and apprised the pontiff. The fact is that the Benedictine writers followed by our author, having exhausted their system of fiction upon the narrative of previous ages, now recommenced it anew. St. Dunstan revives Christianity, but St. Dunstan is equally ideal with St. Augustine.

It was during the reign of Henry VIII. that retrospective fictions began to be circulated, tending to justify the supremacy of England over Scotland. Referred to the tenth century they assume this form: "Athelstan conquers Constantine of Scotland, and compels him to make a precedent by swearing allegiance to himself." Polydore says that recent Scottish writers dispute this story. And here he somewhat flinches, perhaps, from his duty. He refuses to act the part of a judge; he will confine himself to copying the old English annals, as he calls them. He will not embroil himself in the disputes of England and Scotland, and give offence to this people or to that. And yet, a few sentences later, he cannot refrain from denouncing the falsity of those tales.

He shows, unconsciously, that Athelstan is the hero of the Benedictines. They say that he built two convents for them, one at Melton, in the diocese of Salisbury, and one in Michelney Marsh, in Somerset, that the monks might not wander, especially in the winter, contrary to the law of their Order, for the place was then inaccessible, except by boat. Both Athelstan and his successor Edmund were legislators, but their monuments in this department of culture are "forgotten."

To Edmund succeeded Eldred. Here a brief list of the Scottish kings down to Macbeth (or Maccabæus, as Polydore calls him) is interposed.

The pious ambition of Eldred was to outvie Ethelwold, that most holy monk of the Order of St. Benedict. He restored the cloister of Abingdon, the foundation of Ina. Yet he sent into exile Wulstan, archbishop of York, who was, however, recalled. Odo of Canterbury and the Kingston legend are but slightly mentioned; but the impressive legend of Edwin and Dunstan is given in more detail, the indecency of which shall not sully our pages. Polydore frequently gives proof of his own great taste and at the same time of the necessity he felt laid upon him to gratify the appetite of his readers for the gross no less than for the prodigious. Dunstan, the holy Abbot of Glastonbury, denounces Edwin's crime; Edwin perishes of grief, and Edgar succeeds. We will not detain the reader with the tale of the vast fleet which he raised to guard our coasts, nor of the tribute of 300 wolves imposed on the Welsh, nor of how he called Dunstan from exile, and made him bishop of Worcester, and bishop of London. "At *that* time," adds our arch-deacon of Wells, with a certain slyness, "bishops had not more *money*, but more learning, more holiness, more wisdom than other people."

A little later, he appears to indulge himself in some satire against the Order. He says that the monks are very clever in their pretences of learning and sanctity. He can understand how they could have prevailed on the king to invoke the Apostolic authority of Rome that the wedded secular priests might be cast out of Winton and Sherborne. He does not observe that we have here polemic in the guise of story ;

More Bene-
dictine
legends.

Satire on
the monks.

and that the hatred of the monks towards lovely women outside the cloister takes form in the legend of Alfreda, daughter of the Duke of Cornwall, beloved of Edgar. Nor does he note that the great love of Edgar towards those choice privy councillors, Dunstan, Ethelwold and Oswald, all of them Benedictine ideals, is an important moral instruction to the kings of the House of Tudor.

Polydore, however, must have been aware that the pretence of learning and sanctity cloked the most insatiable greed and ambition; for he immediately proceeds to tell how the time of Dunstan was the time of the acquisition of boundless wealth. There was in consequence a terrible degeneration. Infected by the plague of wealth, they became tyrants, they forgot to observe the prophetic word, "If riches increase, set not your hearts upon them." He observes a strong contrast between the idyllic pristine piety of the old solitudes and the social sensualities that now prevail. Such contrasts abound in the literature of the monks, and they are parts of a mass of evidence which proves the discontent of many of the regular clergy, and their hatred of the hypocrisy of popes, bishops, and abbots, which had been strained to an intolerable pitch. Discovering neither learning nor sanctity in the contemporary rulers of the Church, they are doing something to call those virtues, according to their notions, into being by relegating them to a remote and impossible past.

Edgar is made to endow the Benedictines at Wilton. He is also made the giver of laws, "long forgotten," like those of his predecessors. In the time of his successor, Edward II., there was a Council at Winton under Dunstan. Certain ambitious young men sided with the expelled secular priests. The majority was in their favour, when suddenly a voice was heard, "*They*

are in the wrong who favour the priests." As if, comments Polydore, it decided in favour of the thieving of the monks than of the rights of the priests. But since the voice appeared to come from the image of Christ crucified, the oracle was believed; the priests lost their case, and the disturbance was at an end. Did the monks, indeed, enjoy divine aid? Polydore, for his part, considers that the affair savoured more of the tricks of Delphi than of the inspiration of God. The tale of Alfreda, wicked stepmother of the king, who treacherously murdered him at Corfe, was also useful. In the violence of her penitential grief she lavished her property on Church building, on the nunnery at Amesbury of the Order of Cluny, and that of St. Benedict at Wherwell, where she passed the rest of her days.

We pass on to the next age, to the legend of how the Dacians impiously strove to eradicate the Christian religion from the minds of men, along with the English name; how Sweyn Lib. VII.
Sweyn the
Dacian. destroyed the monastery at Bury, and so on. "*The monks are fond of miracles,*" observes our critic. They tell that Sweyn, in the moment of victorious exultation, was pierced by a dagger thrust down from heaven, and fell dead on the spot. The gods must have been wrath with him. A prettier fable (says Polydore) supplanted this: he was struck with the very knife that St. Edmund had worn in his lifetime. But Sweyn appeared in quite a different light to the monk called Saxo Grammaticus, and naturally so, for *he* did not write in the English interest, but in that of the "Dacians." Did not the Dacians receive the Christian dogma under Sweyn? Did he not conquer the English, and die like a Christian? Polydore is of that opinion.

Canute was also an eminent Christian ; he appeased the wrath of St. Edmund, and richly endowed the monks. About the same time, Peterborough cloisters rose under the devout exertions of Ethelwold, bishop of Winton ; and those of Ramsey, of the same highly favoured Order, owed their origin to Oswald, archbishop of York. St. Cuthbert's body was carried to Durham, which became an episcopal see. Canute was also very fond of the family of St. Benedict, and justly : he owed his empire to them, which is still undiscoverable, unless in their phantasy and works of art. St. Benedict's, seven miles from Norwich, was his foundation, and a second in Norway. The monks say in allegory they went hence to Bergen. The resemblance, indeed, between Drontheim cathedral and our own buildings of the same period is well known ; but these buildings do not date from the tenth or the eleventh century. The fine story is told of how Canute bade the waves retire, and delivered a sermon on the contempt of the laws of Nature for kings. To defy the laws of Nature is a privilege exclusively reserved for the saints of the cloisters. At Winton he placed his crown on the head of Christ crucified, and never wore it again.

When Canute died, the English succession to the throne became a subject of great anxiety to the monks of the Order of St. Benet, and in particular to Brithowold, that most holy monk of Glastonbury. In the stillness of the night the Apostle Peter appeared to him in the act of consecrating Edward, son of Ethelred, King of England, though he was at the time an exile in Normandy. Inquiring who should succeed Edward, the apostle replied, "*Take no thought of such things. The Kingdom*

Lib. VIII.
Canute,
Patron of
the Bene-
dictines.

St. Peter
appears. The
kingdom of
England the
kingdom of
God.

of *England is the Kingdom of God.*" Polydore appears to think that the tale will provoke a smile.

"But," he gravely argues, "the Apostolic proposition is proved by many good arguments. The English"—he means the upper classes—"are most indifferent to politics. They are all for monopolies. They let the kingdom be overrun by Dacians and Normans; they were themselves all but destroyed. Yet for all that, the Kingdom of England stands, and looks as if it would stand for ever. We should believe that this is due to the favour of God Almighty in return for the remarkable and increasing glow of piety which contrasts the English with other peoples." This comment illustrates how any plausible sentiment in the mind of the clergy may with propriety be put in the mouth of an apostle or of God himself.

As to the tales that follow about Harold and Canute the Second, Polydore notes that again "Saxo Grammaticus" varies from the English Benedictines, but he does not note the interested reasons for this. We arrive at the end of the Dacian, or Danish, rule, and the Norman dynasty makes its appearance on the theatre of English History. Its greatness is concentrated in the person of William the Bastard, by no means a title of dishonour in those days, as Selden has noticed. The belief common to all the mythologies is that founders of new lines must always be born out of the usual and legitimate course of things. The tale of how Robert his father must make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, must on his way visit Benedict IX. at Rome, and clothe the statue of Constantine with a golden pall, is part of the great system of the romance of the Crusades, composed in the cloisters at the time when the power of the Turk threatened the West.

Polydore repeats some of the amusing tales about Duke Robert and his marriage.

Polydore is a great witness to the rise in his time of that yearning of the English imagination after the "Common Laws" of the time of old, which gradually led to the discovery of the "Common Law" about the time of Sir Edward Coke, its great Oracle. The theory was that Edward, styled by the Benedictines the Confessor, had made a selection from British, English, and Dacian laws, of which the tyranny of the Normans deprived them. It was the admirable Edward who, seeing a devil playing about a heap of gold collected by the tax-gatherers, was horror-struck, and ordered the sum to be repaid to the people. Such a picture was agreeable to the taste of a time when Henry VII. and his ministers were chiefly remembered as cruel extortioners.

Of the many miracles told of Edward, Polydore selects one which envelops a prophecy after the event. During the Mass he saw the boy JESUS in the Eucharist. Leofred, Earl of the Mercians, also saw and laughed, declaring that he had beheld in vision the Dacians sailing for England, but shipwrecked and driven back, which actually occurred. Edward was wont to heal strumous persons by his touch, an immortal gift which flowed to his successors. Another extant royal custom is that of consecrating rings on the day of the Parascev  as a safeguard against paralysis; it also is traced up to Edward and the ring brought by pilgrims from Jerusalem.

With the battle of Hastings and the death of Harold, we arrive at the end of the series of the kings of the English, 617 years after Duke Hengst; and at the end of the 148th page of

The
"Common
Laws."

Lib. IX.

Polydore's "Anglican History." He pauses to moralise, and we may also pause to remind ourselves that this series of ecclesiastical historical frescoes were indeed quite freshly painted, and had a fresh appearance to the imaginative eye of the public in the time of King Henry VIII.

CHAPTER III.

POLYDORE VERGIL—*continued.*

I SHALL not ask the reader to travel through the whole tale of the Normans in England, even in the brief form of Polydore's narrative. It might be tedious ; and it is mostly but an abstract from the system of the Benedictines. It is only important to point out how faint and feeble the dramatic impression is compared with that which had been produced by the incessant labour of our literary artists at the end of Elizabeth's reign. The tragedy of the tyrant Maccabæus, or Macbeth, of Scotland, for example, is dismissed in a few cold lines.

Polydore heard the Curfew bell ring each night, and was told that the custom had come down from
The Curfew. William the Norman. Certain strong towers, he read, had been built by him. All that affected the imagination with gloom and discontent—the condition of the tenantry of the land, and of the mass of slaves—went back to the stern and awful figure of William the Norman. There was arbitrary jurisdiction at Westminster in the hands of the king's judges ; in the country districts the people smarted under the rule of the sheriffs and the justices of the peace. Outlaws everywhere abounded ; the magnificent outlaw ideal of Robin Hood was the darling of the people's heart. And these

phænomena of the Tudor reign were easily traced to an iron man of 500 years ago. The odium of the Exchequer and its Barons was cast back upon him. And it is worth the notice of modern students who believe in the mock antiquities of the Exchequer that Polydore ignores the barbarous word *Scaccarium*. He refers to it as *Sacrarium*, and, with the poor etymology current in his time, says that William called it *Statarium*, because it was the *stable* seat of the kingdom. It is Regina Pecunia who establishes a kingdom.*

Polydore refers to the supreme office of Chancellor (a new word), who is at the head of a College ^{The} of Scribes, their business being to draw up ^{Chancellors.} diplomata. This institution must also derive from William the Conqueror. Had Polydore bent his mind on the subject, he would have found it impossible to trace up an authentic list of the Chancellors much beyond the Tudor constitution. The laws were bad; and the tale with which the English people were amused in their misery was that William had done away with the laws of his holy predecessors. Yet here Polydore comes upon a startling, wonderful, and incredible fact. *The laws are still written in the Norman tongue, and are not understood either by English or French.* The fearful injustice of such a system reflects most shamefully upon the Norman character. And, indeed, says our witness, in the arts of calumnation, prevarication, and tergiversation, the Normans surpass all others.

Polydore describes what he calls the terrible institution of the Grand Jury as it existed in his ^{The Grand} day. He had found in a MS. an account of ^{Jury.} the Ten Men of the Hundred in Alfred's time. He

* The materials in Madox's "History of the Exchequer" are all derived from the Black Monks, writing near Polydore's time.

thinks it is a strong case against the injustice of the Norman laws that the successors of William are always promising to restore "the old laws of St. Edward." After all, the stern fact remains, that these fearful "Norman Laws" are in force—very many of them—in Henry VIII.'s reign, especially those which are of use to the king rather than to the people.

Nay, more. The very acts of violence allegorically ascribed to William are the acts of Henry VII. and Henry VIII. The oppressive taxation of the Tudors, their spoliation of churches and monasteries is an imitation of the evil example of the Conqueror, who was only beginning to be heard of when Henry Tudor conquered the throne. But there is always some redeeming trait in bad men; and it stands to the credit of William that he deprived some criminal bishops and abbots of their offices. Stigand, for example, the possessor of the sees both of Canterbury and Winton—Stigand, who had dared to take the pall from the hands of the desecrated Pope Benedict X., was himself desecrated, at the instigation of William, and perished in prison. But some say that the motive of the act was the substitution of Norman for English bishops. The tale of Lanfranc, his successor, has already been discussed in connection with the rise of the Benedictine Schools.

The talk of Domesday Book and the Census of William was not very prevalent until after Polydore's time, among the antiquaries of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Our author bluntly says that William's object in holding the census was that he might know how much wool there remained on the English sheep to be shorn. He draws a dark picture of his tyranny in depopulating the land from Salisbury to

The census of William.

the ocean—a distance of thirty miles—to make the New Forest.

Yet William in old age was of wondrous piety towards the Christian religion; the proof being that he built three magnificent monasteries and endowed them. One was St. Martin's, at Battle; the second, St. Saviour's, near London; the third at Caen, where also his wife, Matilda, built a convent for nuns. As usual, there was a moral attached to the tale of these foundations. The marriage between William and Matilda had not been rightly contracted, because they were near akin. Manger, archbishop of Rouen, laid, therefore, an interdict upon them. The wife in revenge—it is well known how revengeful women are—urged William to deprive the good Manger on the pretence of negligence in his duties. Now, the archbishop was actually William's uncle by an illegitimate connection. In penitence for their impiety, the two Norman cloisters were built by the royal pair. The Benedictines lose no opportunity of inculcating the lesson that the greatest crimes may be atoned, late in life, by donations to the Order; and the greatest crimes are offences against the Order.

There is great instruction in English History to be derived from their writings, of which Polydore was one of the first honest students, if you employ them, not as Thierry and Freeman and Stubbs have employed them, without inquiry into their origin, but with a view to discover some reflections of the Tudor period. Polydore, in fact, sees that the system of English and French government is essentially that ascribed to William. The laws and institutions are the same; the royal insignia are the same. Polydore mentions the lions and the lilies.

He is instructed by his monkish guides to discover holy or learned men of the Order in William's time, survivors of the blessed Edward, who, however, is not yet known as the Confessor. Such were the absolutely illiterate but very holy Wulstan, bishop of Worcester, Hermann, first bishop of Salisbury, and Osmund, his successor, whose equal both in holiness and learning has hardly since been known. This great reputation, however, rests solely on some ruins at Salisbury, the miracles there wrought by his corpse, and the "Horary Prayers," or "Divine Office," as it is called, now in use through nearly the whole of England. Yet we must deny to any Sarum Service Book an antiquity much higher than the fifteenth century. The figure of Berengarius of Andagavencis is also introduced. He (a heretic of Benedictine invention) was led by devilish arts to deny the true Body of Christ in the Eucharist except as the "sign of the Mystery." He afterwards publicly confessed his error. Lanfranc opposed him and Alberic. The method of these romantic theologians is to define the dogma of the Order by setting up an imaginary heretic to teach its opposite.

They had made up their minds to represent William, called Rufus, as a wicked king. Consequently, thunder and lightning, with fires all over the land, ominated his advent to the throne, to which he was raised by the busy offices of Lanfranc. Polydore sketches the character of that inimitable prelate; but he did not know so much of him as our contemporary and countryman, Mr. Freeman.* The portrait is one of the Benedictine *chef d'œuvres*, well executed perhaps, although with a too emphatic affectation in certain attitudes. After Lanfranc's death, Rufus

Lib. X.
The wicked
Rufus.

* Written December, 1890.

behaves very ill. He is very greedy of Church monies, he has ever before his eyes the old proverb of the Hebrews, "Money is the master of all." The oft-repeated charges of greed against English kings are conceived somewhat crudely. They remind of the tale of the two children, each of them intent upon the possession of a cake. The one takes it, the other complains of his greed, for, says he, "I meant to have the cake myself."

Occasionally, even Rufus was capable of doing what was right. Two needy and greedy monks went to him to buy an abbacy at his hands. Myths of customs. They named their price. The king's glance wandered to a third who had come in their company, and asked for a bidding. He replied meekly that he had merely "his holiness and chastity" to offer. Whereupon the king appointed him abbot, and sent away the others in disgrace. "*Queen Interest*," observes our moral historian, in giving this story, "*often turns black into white in the case of men inflamed by greed.*" The custom of taxing vacant abbeys and bishoprics, and of giving the *cong e d' lire* to the monks, is traced up to William Rufus.

It is necessary strictly to distinguish between what Polydore knows from observation and what he has merely read, and perhaps half believes. For example, he says the custom in Scotland still obtains, by which the maiden on her wedding pays a fine in gold to the local lord for the redemption of her modesty. He is taught to trace this institute to the holy Margaret, wife of Malcolm, contemporary of Rufus. As if the tale offered him by his friend Gavin Douglas in MS. had been "over-true," and the Scotch were really Orientals, he says that they were at first polygamous in their institutions, that the nobles had the wives of the plebeians in

common, and that the local lord had the right to interfere in the nuptial relations of his dependents in a manner which he states in plainest language (*jus primæ noctis*).

The law *Ne exeat regno* is put in force when required, under Henry VIII. It also is traced up to the tyrannic system of exaction and confiscation under Rufus. The unfortunate victims are not permitted to flee across the sea, that they may shun the sight of the miseries of the country. Norman fable again proves to be Tudor fact. Our Italian gazed at Westminster Hall, the place of Quarter Sessions, the sad resort of litigants. That building, the adjacent Basilica, and the Walls of London, reminded the people of new excuses for taxation, and they were now beginning to be taught to frown at the name of Rufus the builder. The unhappy man, unrestrained by the most holy Anselm, who is a Lanfranc *redivivus* in these violent efforts at contrast in art, is assisted to a tragic end, which reflects great credit on the dramatic talent of the Benedictines. He breaks blood-vessels. A monk dreams, and sees the king biting the image of Christ crucified, gnawing the legs with his teeth, then cast upon the ground by the feet of Christ himself. Fate urges him into the New Forest, to be transfixed by the Frenchman Tyrell's arrow. He is buried in the temple of SS. Peter and Paul at Winton. Polydore proceeds to draw the moral from his career, and traces all his vices to the fount of Avarice.

Polydore copies the story of Anselm from the Benedictines, and reports their tradition that he founded the cloister at Chester. He names as his works, the *à priori* treatise on the Incarnation ("Cur

*Ne exeat
regno.*

The most
holy
Anselm.

Chester
legends.

Deus homo"), the treatise on Free-will, on Similitudes, on the Cross, and John the Baptist.

The beginnings of Parliament are traced to the time of Henry I., and our author sees in the Two Houses an imitation of the two Houses of Convocation. The reign of the last Norman prince is tediously told, one of the objects being to find the origin of the relations between England, Normandy, and Flanders in this time. The Benedictines of Reading claimed the body of the king. The Frenchmen must now have their turn in the reign, and Stephen of Blois is accordingly raised to the throne by a Benedictine bishop from Glastonbury. Matilda must not be suffered to reign, because "the rule of woman is a base thing." Feversham monastery receives the body of Stephen, and another Frenchman succeeds to the throne in the person of Henry II. The most significant thing in the tales of this reign is the elaborate apology for the rights, or rather the ambitions, of the priesthood elaborated under the form of the biography of Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, who secured the palm of martyrdom, or the reward of conspiracy and rebellion, in the year 1171.

Lib. XI.
Origin of
Parliament.

Lib. XII.
French
kings.

Lib. XIII.

Thomas
Becket.

Polydore was writing about the same time that the immortal "Canterbury Tales" began to be read to the English public, and Chaucer is the best historian of the Benedictine times. Compare them, and there is no difficulty in understanding how the legend of St. Thomas grew up and acquired enormous influence over the English imagination. The tomb (says the Italian) is the chief sight in England. A vast harvest of donations of all kinds is being gathered in day by day, for "*the multitude suppose that God is better approached with*

gold, silver, and precious stones than with prayers." They believed that miracles were constantly wrought at the tomb on behalf of the sick. The saint had died in the cause not only of religion but of English liberty; so it was pretended by men whose policy it was to divide the interests of the king and the people, and to rule by means of the dissensions they provoked.

An interesting passage on Ireland occurs, from which we learn the theory that Ireland had been peopled from Spain, the name Hybernia pointing either to a chieftain Hyber, or to the river Ebro. The Scots from Scythia, or Egypt, came in and called the island Scotia. A description of the character and manners of the people, apparently drawn from personal observation, and the fidelity of which may be admired, is given. It may be again remarked that Polydore is a good witness, because he has a distaste for miracles. He dryly observes that those in vulgar currency about Ireland recede from you further and further as you advance by diligent inquiry toward them—an observation, as we have seen, of very wide application in the whole field of historic inquiry.

However, he indulges his readers occasionally with the food of marvels, as in the tale of the fishes who leapt out of the lake in Normandy on the death of Henry II. The lake was found empty in the morning. Henry was the last of the French kings of England—a circumstance which agitated even the brute creation. Some say he was buried at Chinon, but the Benedictines of St. Ebrulph laid claim to the possession of his body. We are treated to a homily on the king's vices, and it appears that our Italian scholar had read the punning inscription on the tomb of Rosamund in the cloister of Godstowe:—

Story of
Ireland.

“ Hoc jacet in tumulo Rosa mundi, non rosamunda,
Non redolet, sed olet, quæ redolere solet.”

At last English kings begin to reign, and England is herself. London appears worthy of notice; and a pretended member of the Order writes a meagre tract on the subject, which the reader will find prefixed to Stowe's "Survey." It is idle to expect a glimpse of London before the time of Polydore, who describes the City Guilds or Companies. He is good enough to explain to us from the Greek what *monopolies* are, and what is the status of *apprentices*, whom, curiously, he calls *paremp-tilii*, deceived by false etymology. He mentions the Common Council, the twenty-four Wards, with their Aldermen or Senators. He ignores the designation "Lord Mayor," and calls him the "Prætor." The wealth of London is great, and the best society of the kingdom is there to be found. There are no details given. Not a word is said of that splendid society of scholars and wits who were gathering in the Inns of Court, and were preparing to shed lustre upon our literature.

The mention of the haunt of the lawyers reminds us of the epochal reign of King John. Is it to repeat the same thing *ad nauseam*, when the reader is informed that the whole tale, so far as it was developed in Polydore's time, was the recent tale of the Benedictines? It is they who say that the great men came to the cloister of St. Edmund at Bury to talk of revising the laws of St. Edward, under the pretext of a visit for pardon to the shrine. To Bury, then, on this theory should the lover of English liberty cast his reverent gaze. Polydore narrates the train of events which led to the meeting of the king with the armed barons near Windsor Castle but he names neither

Lib. XIV.
The English
kings.
Richard I.

The City
of London.

Lib. XV.
King John.

Runnymede nor Magna Carta. Another place will be more convenient for the exposure of the impossibility of the whole story. It is a monk who has the honour of handing a cup of poisoned wine to the heartless king in the Cistercian cloister of Swineshead, goaded to the act by patriotic indignation, because John had threatened to raise the price of bread.

Under the reign of Henry III., Polydore names two law books which were extant, the Magna Carta and the Forest Charter, and he ascribes the collection of laws, without evidence, to that reign. The whole history of these pretended documents of antiquity begins with the reign of Henry VIII., and is a history of fraud, illusion, pedantry, idle declamation, ending in the Civil War. The mass of the people never heard of this "Bible of the English Constitution" until our own times; nor was there the slightest intention to secure the rights of any below the rank of gentlemen (*liberi homines*) in the most celebrated clause of that Charter. Its significance is best ascertained when read in the light of the tragic story of John Hampden.

We pass on to the reign of Edward I., who has been styled by some of our writers, because of his imagined efforts in legislation, the English Justinian. Polydore, however, knows little or nothing of this. He does not name his services; nor is it probable that the work of Trivet, the Dominican, had come into his hands. As usual, it is an ecclesiastic of the great Order, the Chancellor William Marton, founder of the College of Oxon, who is supposed to be managing the affairs of the kingdom. The Franciscans also began to make themselves felt in the legend, by appointing one of their Order to the diocese of

Lib. XVI.
The
Charters.

Lib. XVII.
The English
Justinian.

Canterbury. This was after the elevation of the princely archbishop to the Cardinalate by Pope Gregory.

In commenting on this legend, Polydore observes that in *that* happy time an ecclesiastic was seldom allowed to obtain two provinces at the same time. Alas! how great the contrast presented by the time of Henry VIII. ! “O Law, now all but overthrown!” he exclaims. “Any man may have a plurality of bishoprics, according to his wealth and powers. You cannot believe that he governs any of them rightly. The care of the flock committed to them is measured not by a sense of duty, but by mere covetousness.” It may be observed that the Franciscans and Dominicans cannot begin their legends earlier than the thirteenth century. They had, however, done next to nothing in general literature at the end of the fifteenth century, as the examination of John Leland will abundantly prove.

Our witness to the actual Constitution under the Tudors is taught to transfer many of its principles to the reign of Edward I. He gives an account of the custom of Copyhold tenure; and his tale runs, that Edward, being the chief landlord in the kingdom, knew that the tables, or copies, or evidences, as they are commonly called, relating to property had been destroyed by time, the ravages of war, or other causes. He therefore issued an edict, requiring all owners of estates in town or country to establish their right and title to them, and to sell to him at auction or to redeem all possessions of which he was the lord. This intolerably harsh edict aroused the greatest grief and wrath among the people. Plebeians who could produce no “copies” could not establish their rights at all. The state of general feeling is condensed, as usual, for the aid of imagination in the form of a personal incident,

John Warren, Earl of Surrey, a popular man, saw the king spreading his net to take fish, and none dared to gainsay him. Warren interfered; and when cited before the Justices and required to produce his title, drew his sword and declared there lay his right, and there the means of his defence. Some say he was slain on the spot. But the king desisted from his encroachments.

Our author is aware that the German Hanse League The Hanse League. claim to have had their liberties and privileges given by Henry III. and confirmed by Edward I. In fact, every important guild was seeking during Henry VIII.'s time to find a foothold in old English history. Literary fiction was freely resorted to as a means of defence against violence and encroachment. The excusable and the inexcusable grew up together and constituted the conventional system of ideas that was called English History.

Among a variety of matters, it is interesting to note Merton College. that Merton, or Marton, College, Oxon, is said to have been founded in this reign by William Marton, who afterwards became Bishop of Rochester. Merton College was in reality founded by the Friars, and the legend of origin is from them. This being so, it was certain that they would produce some pretended literary antiquities of that college, the worth of which may be learned from John Leland. In our own time a scholar whose long researches command our gratitude, has examined the archives of Merton, and has laid some results before the public. This data should be tested by a critical examination of the legend of Merton; and such an examination will lend to the conclusion that these documents are not of the thirteenth or fourteenth century at all, but were fabricated during the very

period when Oxford appears to be doing nothing in literature, in common with all the religious houses.

The conventional tale of the expulsion of the Jews in 1290 is given. It was at the instigation of the monks and friars. But this tale is not ^{The Jews.} really confirmed by the Jews themselves, whose historian, the Spanish Rabbi Joseph ben Meir, was writing during Polydore's time. His work, studied with the least critical care, shows that the people had not kept any exact records of the times of their sufferings, and that the Jewish chronicler was dependent for his dates upon the chronicles of his enemies, the monks. In fact—and it is necessary to repeat the remark in different places—it has been found impossible by our contemporary, the late Dr. Graetz, to do more than present the merest outline of the fortunes of the Jews during the 300 years or thereabouts that are said to have elapsed between the death of Maimonides and the establishment of the Inquisition in Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella. The date, 1290, is therefore merely a guess, an attempt to define the aoristic in the past of the Jews in England.

Polydore offers an observation about the Jews which is worth recalling for several reasons. He says that were the Jews entirely to perish, the rest of mankind would not be sorry, provided only they left their Letters behind them; for without their books, how could the Church system be carried on? Such is the stupid inhumanity bred in men's minds by Church teaching. It is one of the first of laws in the study of literature that the love of a book is the love of the mind and heart of the writer. To admire the Psalms or the Prophets is to admire the Jewish genius and the Jewish soul; but to admire in Psalms and

The feeling
in reference
to the Jews.

Prophets a meaning that is not in them, but which you have forced upon them, is a sin against the Jewish soul. And after this, to desire the extirpation of the people itself is a wickedness which runs into the last extreme of absurdity.

Again we find a mention of Magna Carta. Chapter XXXVI., forbidding the endowment of monasteries, is said to have received confirmation in this reign. The law is called *ad Manum mortuam*, or *Mortmain*. Polydore is merely a witness for the fact that the law is strictly observed in his time. It can only be set aside by the king's permission. Certainly, it will be impossible for any critic to trace the "law" or edict higher than the Tudors, with whom begins the series of statutes, as Mr. Reeves has observed, on which any certainty can be built.

Balliol College is associated with the legend of John Balliol, King of Scotland, who desired by its foundation and endowment to win the favour of the English. The root of the legend, as were a great number of other international legends, is to be found in the interests of certain nobles and clergy.* The latter class thrust themselves into everything. They pretend that Edward sacrilegiously seized all their wealth in order to make war on the Welsh, and refused to repeal the statute of *Mortmain*. His punishment was that his brother Edmund was defeated by the Welsh. Another incident is that during a raid on the French on the coast of Kent a very innocent monk named Thomas perished. Honoured as a martyr, miracles were frequently sought through him.

On pursuing the tedious tales of domestic and foreign

* There is a mass of fiction and counter-fiction about Balliol, all dating from the Tudor time.

wars during this reign, we find clear revelations of the mental habits of the monk. True, he wrote in turbulent times, but he delights to magnify the turbulence beyond all actual possibility. He is like "the prophet Zechariah," uneasy, distressed when the world is quiet, sure only of the favour of heaven when the nations are in strife, because then his corporation profits and prospers. How absurd it is to take these wonderful wars of Edward too seriously, the mere fact of the non-existence of a regular military force to the end of the fifteenth century reminds us.

The tale runs that Pope Boniface VIII., whose memory began to be blackened by certain literary priests on the eve of the Reformation, determined to exempt the clergy from taxation in this reign; and that Edward levied a tax upon the people and the priesthood in a Council at St. Edmund's Bury. The people being unable to refuse, said they would pay, but the clergy replied that they were not allowed to pay by the pre-script of the Pope. The king was wrath, and ordered the goods of the priesthood to be published and sold. Most of the clergy submitted for the sake of a quiet life, but Robert of Canterbury had the courage to resist the prince and to repeat the Apostolic word, "We must obey God rather than men." So thus mere self-interest takes upon itself the airs of sanctity and the merit of martyrdom. It is this same archbishop of Canterbury who is put forward by the monkish artists to soothe the multitude when they break out into insurrection.

The sources for this reign, only partly brought to light in Polydore's time, are simply a mass of fiction and fraud. Without examining the whole tale relating to Scottish affairs, it may be sufficient to refer the

reader to the analysis of it in David Hume, who used the collection of Rymer, that painstaking antiquary of Queen Anne's time. Hume denied that there was any truth in early Scottish history except the mere succession of the kings. Had he looked more closely into his authorities, he would have seen that the succession itself was an invention of the time of Gavin Douglas ; and had he tested the value of the so-called " Records " collected by Rymer, he would not have set down to the credit of King Edward that string of impudent fabrications by which he traces the English monarchy up to the time of Eli and Samuel, and claims on such grounds feudal superiority over the kings of Scotland. The student who will consult Strype, another scholar of Queen Anne's time, will see from the strange tales he tells about the Records, that they were not begun till about the middle of the sixteenth century, and were then written in support of the dogma of British history already received. In no one department of learning had men the honesty to say openly that no such thing as notes of events in Edward's reign had descended to the Tudor period.

We have now arrived at about halfway through Polydore's volume, or the 346th page ; we are supposed to have travelled through a space of several hundred years, and are still in the dreamland of monkish invention, of political and ecclesiastical allegories, which may be understood in the light of the changes that were occurring in the reign of Henry VIII.

CHAPTER IV.

POLYDORE VERGIL—*continued.*

THERE was a political reason for making Edward II. a Welshman, which Hume calls “a vulgar Lib. XVIII. tale suited to the capacity of the monks.” It Edward II. was suited to the interests for which they wrote; and it also appears that Edward I. and Edward II. as English kings correspond to William I. and William II., the Normans. The second Edward also falls off in like manner from the stern virtues of his arbitrary father. The tragic tales of Pierre Gaveston and of Isabella, and the fate of the hapless king made a deep impression on the mind of our young poets in the rising school of the Inns of Court. But, as usual, the Benedictines, who claim his body for St. Peter’s, Gloucester, were the original inventors of the argument. Polydore, with his usual sobriety, reads the warning against evil companions and counsellors. The Stories are ever Moral.

The general idea on which the monks worked at this reign was probably the favourite one that the sins of the fathers must be visited on the children, and vengeance for Edward I.’s anti-ecclesiastical policy must fall on the head of the luckless son, the vanquished of the Scots, whom his father had conquered. Bannockburn is a criticism upon Longshank. It is clear that the monks do not conceal their sympathy with “Thomas

of Lancaster," the rebel whom they convert into a martyr. However, Polydore witnesses to a violent difference of opinion on this question, and passes over the matter with his usual contempt for the opinions of the vulgar. Hume, comparing the accounts in the monks and canons, denounces Thomas as a traitor, and the worse because a hypocrite. The legend has no more base in particular facts than that of the Canterbury Thomas; its object is the same: to glorify rebellion and throw a cloke of sanctity over crimes which became virtues when related to the interests of the Church. Kings are constantly objects of contempt, because they are part of the system of "this present evil world."

We come to the reign of Edward III. It is to be presumed that Polydore used the Chronicle ascribed to Froissart, Canon of Chymay, which became known early in the sixteenth century, and was translated into English about 1529, according to the bookseller's statement, by Lord Berners. The story of this reign was conceived in a manner gratifying in the highest degree to that natural vanity which is traceable elsewhere in our early literature. Englishmen were taught to believe themselves much better men than Frenchmen by the story of Edward's wars. Froissart's work is written in a pleasing style of retrospective art, as I have elsewhere shown. He is in the secret of the system supported by Walsingham, Knighton, Hemingford, and others.

The glorification of the English Archers is very conspicuous in the Scottish and French wars; but how is it that our sceptical Hume passed with the remark "Almost incredible" the story that at Halidon Hill the loss of the Scotch was 30,000, that of the English the knight, the esquire, and 13

private soldiers? Edward III. must have been, in the opinion of the artists of the religious houses, a heaven-favoured king. The like absurd disproportion obtains in the accounts of the Battle of Crécy; this time it is the esquire and 3 knights, with a few of lower rank, who fall on the English side, against 1200 knights, 1400 gentlemen, 4000 men-at-arms, and 30,000 of lower rank on the French side! On the story of the burghers of Calais, Hume merely remarks that, "like all other extraordinary stories, it is somewhat to be suspected." Who that has a feeling for what poetry and art is, can for a moment confuse such representation with reported fact? The whole manner of these chroniclers is quite consistent with the ascertained fact that they were writing in the dawn of our national poetry, and referring their ideals to a time actually unknown except through the medium of vaguest rumours. The loss of France is thus imaginatively avenged.

Regarding the pictures of the time of Edward, Philippa, and the Black Prince as the work of Tudor artists, it is interesting to observe how a fresh tone and colouring begins to suffuse these representations. The monk has done his work; he has made ancient history his own; he will not incautiously thrust himself into the near foreground of reminiscence, where he would be detected as out of place. He aptly sets his impressive figures in the more mysterious background, and leaves his gay secular brethren, artists such as Wolsey might delight to patronize, to busy themselves with the ideals of chivalry and gallantry. The tale of the origin of the Order of the Garter pleases

The Order of
the Garter.

by its truth in relation to such sentiments. The quaint badge with the smiling motto once assumed in honour of the ladies, it was easy to find for it a

plausible and a royal origin. We delight in the time, because by the literary convention the artists of the "Canterbury Tales" fill it with figures that move at last with ease and lifelikeness. It is a very jolly party that makes the annual pilgrimage to Canterbury in honour of St. Thomas, a more sedate yet splendid throng that betakes itself to Windsor Castle on the feast of the divine warrior, St. George.

The College of Heraldry or Kings of Arms (it may be observed), begins to be heard of in Henry VIII.'s time, but the first distinguished man in their science is William Camden. The origin of that science they love to trace to Edward III.'s time by the proleptic habit that was universal. Let us be lenient to their fables. It is they who have amused us with the tales of the descent from "the Normans" of men who perhaps had no authentic record of their great-grandfathers; and showed a power of imagination almost equal to that of Jews or Arabians in the construction of genealogies and pleasing tales. But the good Polydore is at our elbow, warning us not to confuse our English facts with our English poesies.

His remarks on the popular tale of the Garter shed an useful light upon the habits of some of our literary men all through the century. He finds fault with some of them as too "modest and superstitious" because they pass the tale in silence. They fear lest they may be guilty of high treason in assigning such an origin to this august Order of the Garter, as is told in the vulgar tale. It appears to them too mean or low. "Why," exclaims Polydore, "you have plenty of other examples of great and dignified things coming from a small and sordid origin. Consider the razed crown of the priesthood; was anything more ugly and

despised in days of yore among the peoples? But now it is the unique distinction of the sacred from the profane head. Look at the old Roman College of Arval Brothers, traced up to Romulus; its early honour must have been but small (see my work on 'Inventors'). Read, again, what Livy says about the censorship, and the early despute in which it was held."

Our Italian courtier kindles into enthusiasm over the Order of the Garter. Suppose its origin to have been from Love. What nobler than Love? Does not Ovid say, *Nobilitas sub amore jacet*? "I tell you positively that the vulgar story of the cause of the Garter is no idle story!" exclaims Polydore; and we thank him, clergyman and Papalist as he is, for his warm interest in the religion of St. George. He sees the head of the English soldiery seated in armour on horseback with the red cross shield, his servants clad with the white cloke with the double red cross. A fair and magnificent sight to behold the English legions glistening and sparkling afar like the Orient sun, a brilliant contrast to the dull-hued soldiery of other nations!

These are the pictures of our past to which the true English mind loves to turn, after the monotony and the affectation and grimace of the cloister. Strength and tenderness to the weak are true attitudes of the English character; love and reverence toward woman an essential in the general national religion; and more congenial to our nature has been from the first the cult of St. George than that of St. Benedict.

To turn to other matters of national interest, which are said to have stirred during this long reign. Polydore says that about the middle of the fourteenth century two false monks, as he describes

The religion
of St.
George.

Franciscan
legends.

them, of the Order of St. Francis, were burned in London for heresy. There follows the curious statement that the king's mother, Isabella, a lady worthy of immortal fame for goodness, died next year and was buried in the cloister of the Franciscans, or Grey Friars. It was true that she had persecuted her husband, but it was from patriotic motives. The probability is that both these stories came from the Franciscans themselves in Polydore's own time. The latter legend tends to cast the lustre of royalty upon their cloister; the former may have been designed to act as a deterrent in a time that was now rife with heresies.

Of this principle in English History another notorious example is presented in the tale of Wiclif, as Polydore briefly tells it. He spells the name Wythcliff, probably for Whitecliff, as a personal symbol of England. Not to repeat his words, but to give the sense of them as evidence: our Archdeacon bears witness that in his time poor people of the common herd were occasionally burned alive along with certain tracts found in their possession, which were said to have come from the pen of Wytcliff. Even this is mere hearsay, apparently, like the heartless talk of Hugh Latimer about the burning of Anabaptists. But the wickedness of the tracts consisted in the fact that they contained Wytcliff's "pernicious superstitions" in the English tongue. He was a violent enemy of the priesthood, he "wrongly rendered the Scriptures," he founded a new sect at Oxford School. He was moved to this by disappointed ambition in his profession, and was the head and front of "a band of infamous men of like disposition." He went in solitary exile to the Bohemians, and taught them to despise the priesthood and the Roman pontiff.

Substantially this was all that was known or rumoured of the English haeresiarch in the middle of the sixteenth century. And this mere rumour had been derived by Polydore from some bare entries in the monastic chronicles. John Leland, a little later, gives two short entries from "Tyne Annals" (as he calls them), scoffs at Polydore because he talks about Wiclif going to the Bohemians, and gives his version of the tale, which is, that certain Bohemians came to Oxon, and became acquainted with Wiclif's opinions. John Leland knows next to nothing about either Latin or English writings ascribed to the Oxford scholar.*

We may advance to the epoch of "the Council of Constance," some forty years later, only to find that Polydore, following his authorities, is still moving in the atmosphere of fable. He says that at this Council the heresy of John Wycliff was condemned, and that John Huss and Jerome of Prague, the heads of the sect at that time, were burned. The rest of the conspirators in England, on hearing of this, were infuriated, and engaged in conspiracies against the priesthood and against the king, Henry V. They resolved to defend their opinions by arms. Under John Oldcastle and Roger Acton, a band of desperate men rushed to London. They were anticipated by the prompt action of the king, were dispersed, slain, or taken prisoners. Roger was put to death, and Oldcastle escaped by night from the Tower. The sectarians were denounced as enemies of their country, who were to be treated with the utmost severity. It is represented that Henry V. was bent upon the destruction of the sect *c.* 1415.

The Council
of Con-
stance.

It will be found that we have not from any part of

* The fourteenth century is Dr. Wm. Cave's "Wiclevian Age."

Europe a writer whose dates, or whose particulars in reference to person and place can be trusted for this period of "Wiclif, Huss, Jerome of Prague, and the Council of Constance." * The writers are few in number; they are the immediate predecessors or the coevals of Polydore; they reflect the commotion that was going on among clergy and people, the discontent of the papal tyranny, the incipient reformation. It may be quite true, and it probably is true, that these movements had been felt for a century before men began to write them down. But they, in accordance with the universal habit of the time, conceal their ignorance of the exact origin in the circumstantial tale of Wiclif and his secret sect, who are destined to be regarded by the one party as infamous rebels and traitors, by the opposite party as heroes or martyrs of the Reformation.

By Hume and others remark has been made on the untrustworthiness of the sources for the reign of Richard II. Had they explored those sources, so few in number and so poor in quality, they would have seen them to be neither contemporary nor founded upon any extant records; and that the interest of the tales in Froissart and Walsingham consists in the fact that they present a partial mirror of the actual condition of the country under the Tudors. Analogous phænomena in the tales of the Continent indicate a similar state of things in France and in Flanders. But, according to Froissart, the slavery of the masses was more general in England than elsewhere.

While, therefore, the tales of popular insurrection are not to be understood as contemporary records of passing events, they are of still higher value as materials of genuine English history,

* See the "Wiclevian Age," in Dr. Wm. Cave's "Hist. Litt."

when their rise in literature is correctly understood. The march of the rustic rebels to Black Heath in the time of Henry VII., when the good yeoman Latimer, as his son tells us, donned his armour in the service of the king, may be accepted as fact. The event was so exciting and so charged with social and political significance, it stimulated our historic romancers to produce the tale of the insurrection of the Tilers, the Thatchers, the Carters, and the Millers a hundred years before that event. General sentiments, recurrent events of tragic oppression, are cast into the form of the popular historic drama.

A thousand outrages at the hands of the tax-gatherers are perhaps condensed into the tale of the Tiler's daughter and her vengeful father. ^{Wat the Tiler.} Scenes of riot and murder in London, when the people discharged their fury upon the heads of the great and the rich, whose luxury affronted their misery, are presented under similar forms of poetic retrospection. The fact escapes that there was no defined system of law and government in England; that charters and rights were only talked of in the presence of imminent danger, and if granted, were withdrawn so soon as the danger was overpast. Ringleaders were executed, the people sunk back again into dejection and slavery, outlaws swarmed in the woods, law was another name for the interests and the tyranny of the strong; and the despairing battle for freedom was bequeathed, as a stern legacy, from one generation to another.*

There were men among the mendicant friars, no doubt, who mingled with these popular movements and perhaps rendered the people service. At all events,

* Polydore never names his sources. But cf. Froissart, ii. 74 ff.; Walsingham, 248 ff.

they appear anxious to claim the honour. Significantly it is stated in "Walsingham" that the rebels intended to murder all the nobility, gentry, lawyers, all the bishops and priests, "except the mendicant friars."

Fate of
Richard II. The tale runs that Richard II. was put to death by slow and tantalizing starvation at Pomfret—"an old wives' fable," says Polydore, "though the vulgar would have it so"—and that his body was carried to the cloister of the monks, preachers, or Dominican Friars at Langley, twenty miles from London. Later, it was removed to Westminster. There is not, however, a single particular statement referring to either the life or death of Richard II. which can be exempted from the province of romance and allegory.

Polydore advances to the reign of Henry IV. Honest Lib. XXI.
Lancastrian
fictions.
Henry IV. though he be, it is not to be forgotten that he was himself a *protégé* of the Lancastrian party, and that he can do little more than repeat the fictions which they began to circulate on the accession of Henry III. What is reported of Henry IV., that he did not wish to *appear* to have become king by violence, is precisely what Bacon was instructed to say about Henry VII. For his title, Henry IV. is made to go back 200 years to Henry III. and his son Edmund, who, it is pretended, was the elder son of that king. The blasphemous assertion of this claim will be found in "Knighton, Canon of Leicester," as he is called; and the constant connection of the names of Christ or of the Trinity with the most cynical mendacities is one of the most repulsive features in these canonical histories. Polydore, with his usual fidelity to his conscience, refuses to build on this tale. He reports that other titles were furnished up: that of the sword, the bequest of Richard, and kinship of blood to him; that Roger, Earl of March,

was the true heir, but that, as usual, violence prevailed over right.

Travelling on this spiral course of fanciful story, the brain becomes giddy with the constant revolutions. The parricides of the late Duke of Gloucester are executed, the exiles of Richard are recalled, and everything begins anew. Henry seats himself in power, calls John Holland, Duke of Exeter and brother of Richard, to his side, makes him commander of Calais. And John Holland begins at once to conspire against Henry. The end of this new tragedy is that Holland meets his retributive doom at the house of the Duke of Gloucester, whose murder he had instigated. The innocent Richard fell a victim to the fears of Henry on this occasion.

Discontent set in among the people. They yearned for dead Richard; lampoons were levelled against Henry with curses; the mendicant friars were busy inflaming these passions, and eight Franciscans were put to death. Then a rumour spread, that King Richard yet lived among the Scots. The people believed, and were ready to rise again, but were quickly suppressed. The same year the Carmelites, or White Friars, claim to have received the body of Robert Canol, who had returned from the government of Aquitaine. Henry himself, at the end of his turbulent reign, is carried to Christ Church, Canterbury. The rule is invariable, that they who guarded the relics of the great were mainly responsible for the stories of their lives.

Polydore, in briefly narrating the tale of Henry V.'s early laxity and subsequent reformation, indulges his readers with a short sermon on the proper behaviour of young princes. To point the moral, no doubt designed for the benefit of the reigning king, the examples of Edward II. and of Richard II. are again

brought forward. Henry V. makes an edifying beginning of his reign by building two monasteries—that at Richmond, and that in London called Bethlehem, dedicated to Jesus, for the Carthusian Friars. Sion monastery, dedicated to Jesus, St. Mary and St. Bridget, was also founded by him in order to “perpetuate the memory of the Holy Land” in the kingdom. It was about half a century before Polydore that the craze for pilgrimages thither began to set in.

The ecclesiastics say that Henry held a Council, at which it was resolved to check the proceedings of the many French monks who held abbacies and other benefices in England, and who constantly sent money to their brethren in France. Foreigners were to be excluded from English benefices, except at the will of the king. Others refer this decree to the time of Richard II., who (says Polydore), it is allowed, decreed that no foreigners should receive the fruits of benefices in their absence from their cures. But the Italian clergyman is never able to give the reference to any statute, with the chapter, king, and year of reign; for the attempt to antedate legislation was beginning in his time.

Following our guide to France, and reading the story of Agincourt, we find occasion again to admire that our later English historians have not had the good sense to take his hints against the credulous reception of miracles. Ten thousand Frenchmen fell, and there was an equal number of captures. Hardly a hundred English fell, with Edward, Duke of York: “*if we believe those who write miracles,*” adds our critic. The reader may find some amusement in referring to the statistics in Walsingham, St. Remy, Monstrelet, and some others on this point; and then in

Feeling
against the
foreign
clergy.

Agincourt,
the miracu-
lous battle.

consulting the opinion of David Hume.* The latter is struck by the close resemblance in the style of the battles of Crécy, Poitiers, and Agincourt, or Dagincourt, as Polydore calls the place. Hume did not perceive that he was studying the works of a school of artists, and that one Englishman was naturally equal to a few hundred Frenchmen, seeing the English fought under a king who was a conspicuous respecter of churches and fierce persecutor of heretics. If, as we proceed, Polydore be compared with the usual sources, which, contrary to his early practice, he never names, it will be seen that these works of art are being elaborated during the time of Henry VIII., and that unconscious preparation is being made for the advent of Shakespeare. The facts are very rare ; but among them may be noticed the use of cannon, or bombards, as the Italian calls them, which Polydore says (in his work on "Inventors") were not known to the French till the year 1480. Yet he describes the English under Bedford as employing them in the year 1425. The improbability does not appear to affect him. It is one of the striking incidental proofs of the utter recklessness of truth and fact in the artists whom he follows.

It is again of importance, in reference to the æsthetic of this romantic art, to note how Polydore treats the tale of the Maid of Orleans, whom the French regarded as a prophetess of God, the English as a witch. He accepts the tale just as he accepts the old tale of Cloelia ; and, pitying the cruel fate of the Maid of Orleans, he brings forward the noble example of Porsena, who rewarded the brave virgin who had fallen twice into his power, and sent her home. This was a rebuke to the intolerable savagery of the English

* England, III. 106.

leaders. Even now, he says, the French honour her as a heaven-sent deliverer. The meaning is that the tale had sprung up in his time, having probably originated at St. Catherine's, Tours. In the absence of chronological criticism, one affecting tale is equally acceptable with another, although an immeasurable distance lies between the epochs of their origins.

At the same time Polydore is a good witness to the fierce hatred that prevailed between the two peoples. The Ethiopian will sooner change his skin than the French people love the English. It is this fact which explains so many changes that were going on in language, literature, manners, during the reign of Henry VIII. The great Duke of Bedford, the column of the English power, is said to have died in 1435, and to have been buried in the great Church of Rouen. Yet no authentic memorials of him can there be discovered.

At last the Tudor, or Tyder, family makes its appearance. Catherine, the young widow of Henry V., had secretly married one Owen Tyder, a noble Welshman of great virtue, who could trace his pedigree back to Cadwallader, last king of the Britons. She had by him three sons, Edmund, Gaspar, and a third who became a monk of the Order of St. Benedict and died young; a daughter, also a member of the Order.* Edmund became Earl of Richmond, and Gaspar Earl of Pembroke. Edmund married Margaret, daughter of the Duke of Somerset, and became father of Henry, later known as King Henry VII. The unfortunate Owen himself, on the death of Catherine, was twice cast into prison "because he had dared to mix his blood with that of kings." At last he was beheaded,

* The story comes from the Benedictines of Croyland, apparently.

by the command of the Duke of Gloucester. If Henry Tudor had been the hero of a modern novel, he would hardly have been accounted for by so ingenious a plot. The death of Catherine is said to have occurred about the year 1436.

The wedding of Henry VI. with Margaret of Anjou is said to have occurred about 1445. It may seem irrelevant to introduce, immediately after the notice of such an event, a reference to the state of farming. And yet such particulars may be of far greater interest to many readers in the present day. The quarter of wheat was sold at only 6s. 8d. (says Polydore), of winter wheat at 4s., and of barley at 3s. Henry granted the privilege to all of buying and exporting corn to foreign parts, "provided only it was not carried to the enemies of England." Edward IV. afterwards "approved" this law.

Lib. XXIII.
Henry VI.
and Mar-
garet of
Anjou.

In the same year the figure of the Duke of Gloucester is supposed to appear on the stage, scenting revolution at hand, and seeking opportunities for intrigue. Henry Chicheley, Archbishop of Canterbury, dies, having founded the convents of All Souls and of St. Bernard's at Oxon, like two "altars of all the virtues." Polydore passes over the state of learning at Oxon in these colleges with one of those flattering flourishes of the pen which decorates either his ignorance or theirs. It suffices to say that Chicheley's labour and expense were not in vain. But we are forced back from the cloistered retreat into the thick of the eternal civil broils.

Queen Margaret, a perfect foil in point of temperament to her meek and saintly husband, Henry VI., now appears on the stage. Clever, ambitious, endowed with an intellect of masculine strength, she pursued her plans

with the greatest perseverance and vigilance. Still, she was a woman, and fickle. She was jealous of the influence of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, and contrived his overthrow. A Council was called at the cloister of Bury St. Edmunds. Gloucester was seized and foully done to death by strangling; his body was carried to St. Albans, whose monks have handed down the tradition of the good Duke Humphrey as patron of their learning. The tale must have come from them.

How fatal, Polydore reflects, was the name of Gloucester to the earls and dukes who bore it! There had been Hugh Spenser and Thomas Woodstock, son of King Edward III.; they had been executed. Then Humphrey and Richard III. The name was a proverb for calamitous men, like the Sejan Horse of old. He does not, however, reflect that such a curse on the name of Gloucester "causeless did not come" from the mouth of the Lancastrians.

Against the year 1447 Polydore again offers a glimpse of Oxford; but we can discern nothing, except that the building of colleges is rapidly going on. Henry, Cardinal Bishop of Winton, had been the stout crutch on which the king had leaned. He died this year, and was succeeded by the admirable William of Waynflete, long Chancellor of England. He built and endowed the College of St. Mary Magdalen, "so that, even as that good woman once refreshed the feet of Christ with sweet ointment, good minds might there, under her presidency, be fed on the perennial nectar of learning." And this, adds the Italian, with smiling courtesy, "they sedulously do." How much politer his language than that of Hume, when he talks of "bad Latin and worse logic," or of his friend Gibbon, with his allusions to the

Fatality of the Gloucester name.

Building of colleges from the middle of the fifteenth century.

“monks of Oxford, sunk in port and prejudice,” even in his late time.

The loss of Normandy by the English is fixed in the year 1451, and that of Aquitaine in the year 1452. Polydore thinks that the cause may better be found in the great hatred aroused against the English in France and the combinations against them, than in any deficiency of the English arms. And again, he bears witness to the intense mutual hatred of the two peoples in his own time. Here, then, as in a multitude of analogous cases, the recent fact, with all the passions which it excited, gave rise to the remote picture. Our early historiographers reasoned thus: “Our ancestors have been masters of Normandy and Aquitaine. What title had they to those possessions? Our kings must have been of the houses of Normandy and Anjou. How could that have been? Norman and French princes must at some time have conquered England.” And the whole Norman and Plantagenet lines were made out, to give plausibility to the hypothesis; while the title to France was still nominally retained to a late date by our English sovereigns.

It is impossible to understand the subject without dwelling upon that intense national vanity or pride which had been wounded during these fruitless raids into France; and which was consoled, when it contemplated in the theatre the heart-stirring exploits of the Black Prince, or of young King Harry in the fields of France. The reading of the tales of the Norman or Anjou princes taught young Englishmen the false lesson that our kings had a right to a great part of that land, and so kept alive that spirit of animosity between two great peoples which has been a hindrance

to civility and to culture. The flattery of the English archers has had much to do with these tales of victories in France. Exact truth on this subject will never be discovered; but in the want of a standing army it is hardly possible that the English could have obtained any durable hold of the cities of France.

And what, now, is the exact worth of the reminiscences or impressions of English affairs during the latter half of the fifteenth century, as they came to the ears of Polydore, or were derived by him from books? He tells us that the failure of the war in France left our princes or leading men in a state of bitter disappointment. They blamed one another for the misfortune; and presently William, Duke of Suffolk, was singled out by universal consent as the scape-goat of the guilt. It was he who had wasted the public money, he who had failed to pay the soldiers, he who had neglected to send reinforcements, he who had cleared the Court of good counsellors, and had carried on everything with a high hand. He and his party were tumultuously accused of parricide and of peculation, and their lives were demanded. The Queen, in her fear of sedition, causes her weak consort to have Suffolk cast into prison. He is restored to the Court a few days later, but on the renewal of the furious demands of the multitude, is exiled; and falls by the blow of an assassin as he is embarking for France. His death is regarded as an act of divine vengeance on the plotter of the death of Gloucester.

No sooner is this chapter of domestic tragedy closed than another opens with the insurrection of the Kentishmen under Jack Cade—for so Polydore gives the probably collective or allegorical name. The scenes of horror on old London Bridge—

Fall of
Suffolk.

The rising
under Jack
Cade.

an object which inspired the Italian with great admiration—the burning houses, the shrieks of the dying, the bodies falling into water, the fate of the brave soldier Matthew Gogthus, or Gough, are feelingly described. The fury of the men of Kent could only be appeased by lenity and promises of pardon to all but the ringleader. The unhappy people, ground down by exaction, knew not how to find relief from their sufferings except by seeking the blood of the evil counsellors of the Court. Some suspected that the insurrection had been stirred up by Richard, heir of the House of York.

Soon after, Richard raises a large force and leads it into Kent, pitching his camp ten miles from London. The object of his determined hostility is the Duke of Somerset, who, according to Polydore, was the statesman of highest character in the kingdom. The two lords appear before the king in Council, in London, and load one another with criminations and recriminations. At last the Duke of York, though roundly denounced as a traitor by Somerset, is suffered to return home; and the power of Somerset, with that of Queen Margaret, is firmly established for a time.

But after a vain effort to recover Aquitaine in 1453, the strife of factions in England broke forth with renewed fury. Polydore writes with perfect good faith, as it appears, on the Lancastrian side; not because he has weighed the merits of the Two Roses, but because there were no other than Lancastrian views officially upheld at the time that he was writing. Incidentally he mentions, after the short account of the battle of St. Albans in 1456, that the same year Osmund of Salisbury was canonized, and that the cult of his miracle-working body began. This is a

good note or ideal *terminus a quo*, by which we may calculate the rise of much similar Church fiction.

Not to follow needlessly all the incidents of the struggle, Polydore describes the captivity of Henry VI. (1460) in a tone of the most pious sympathy with that holy king, who was soon to exchange the terrestrial for the celestial crown. The vulgar believed that a little before, when Henry appeared in the senate in royal apparel, the crown had suddenly fallen from his head. "It was to be," as the current phrase of their indolent fatality still runs. The clerical feeling is here and there apparent in the narrative, as when Henry is forced against his will to fight the disastrous battle of Towton on Palm Sunday, when there should have been cessation of arms.

CHAPTER V.

POLYDORE VERGIL—*continued.*

WITH Edward IV. another revolution—another in the long list of “reversals,” of which, as Hume says, our early English history consists—sets in. All the acts of his predecessor are rescinded. Henry is in Scotland, Margaret in France. For four years Edward is busy with a new settlement of the kingdom. Then he and his great henchman, Beauchamp of Warwick, quarrel, from causes that were darkly guessed but not known; the kingdom is again thrown into misery, and at length Henry is set at liberty and restored to the throne (1471). Warwick is master, and another revolution has occurred. The king sits like a puppet on his throne, while his queen on the one side and Edward on the other are moving heaven and earth in the interests of their parties. The fortune of battle again inclines to Edward, and he comes back in 1472.

The misfortunes of Henry VI. are, however, regulated by the moral purpose of our historiographers. Henry IV. obtained the kingdom by violence, and the sins of the fathers being visited upon the children, it could not remain long in his family. Their hopes perished; the men of Kent who rose under Falconbridge were severely punished by Edward. Henry VI. died in the Tower. So ends the brief tale of this fearful Civil

Lib. XXIV.
Edward IV.

War of twenty years, which must have left behind it so many blackened ruins and desolated fields and orphaned homes, sacrificed to appease the lust for power of a few of our English satraps, whom Hume compares to the Polish nobility of his day.

The story, so far, has little that is incredible. Its mere baldness, in the absence of public records, is what could only be expected from writers who were sitting down to trace the outline of events for the amusement of the public a few decades later. But it is a warning against placing any reliance upon particulars, as distinguished from general impressions, that the incredible begins again with the death of Henry VI. Once more Polydore is a fair witness. But the best witness will not be suffered in a court of justice or letters to give in mere rumour as evidence, however persistent and unchallenged that rumour may be. Nor must he mix the question of fact with theories, or deduce the fact from a foregone conclusion.

But let Polydore speak. It is, he says, the constant report that Richard, Duke of Gloucester, himself smote Henry VI. with his sword in the Tower, that he might deliver his brother Edward from fear of his enemy. But whoever it was that assassinated "that most holy man," it is clear enough that the parricide and the authors of the parricide were punished for their deed; for afterwards, having no enemies on whom to wreak their cruelty, they exerted it upon themselves, and polluted their hands in their own blood, as the sequel will show.

Polydore then reports the fixed idea that King Henry, a saintly and innocent man, had been done to death in the Tower about seventy years before he came to London. He thinks of the act as parricide, and infers,

being a theologian and a moralist, that the authors of the act must have been punished. And he confirms this opinion by later pointing to occurrences for which he has no more evidence than for the assumed fact on which his reasoning is based, or occurrences which, apart from the colour cast upon them by prejudice, have no such significance.

Polydore adds that the body of Henry was borne from the Tower, unhonoured, to the temple of St. Paul, lay there for a whole day *in capulo*, and next day was carried to the convent of the monks of the Order of St. Benedict, which is in the village called Chertsey, and is distant from London fifteen miles. Not long after it was carried to Windsor Castle, and was placed in the new mausoleum of St. George. So do our constant attendants, the Benedictines, accompany us from the first to the last page of the Mediæval story. It was they who must have spread the renown of the unfortunate Henry as "a very holy man," who serves as an admirable foil to the energetic, highly intellectual, and consequently devilish Richard. The monks who told the tale were naturally anxious to call attention to Chertsey. It was very pleasant to receive visitors to the cloister; to show them where the body of a king had lain, and to receive a small contribution to the funds. Chertsey Monastery, Polydore would remind us, referring to his fourth book, was founded by that holy bishop, St. Erchemwald of London, in the seventh century.

You would almost think Polydore a monk himself, so fascinated he is by the holiness of Henry VI., by whose name, while he was yet living, "God wrought miracles." But all this is explained by the fact that a few years before the time

The holy
Henry's
shade.

of Polydore's writing, Henry VII. had negotiated with Pope Julius for the enrolment of Henry VI., who had foretold his own greatness among the saints ; but death interfered with the execution of the duty. It is understood, then, that we see the unfortunate prince through the medium of Lancastrian religious contemplation. He is all but the saint and actually the martyr of that House ; it is but fitting that his murderer should be of the detested House of York. Let us not forget how true a lover he was of learning ; how his holy shade may be supposed to linger about the precincts of that fine college for boy priests at Eton, near Windsor, who were to be fed there and taught grammar gratuitously. He also was the author of King's College, Cambridge. How graceful is the tribute of Polydore to that institution ; so "flourishing in the cult of disciplines, it is easily first of all colleges" ! *

Curious also are the devices by which it is endeavoured to make out Edward IV. to be a murderer at heart, though neither so crafty nor so determined as his brother. The thought of young Henry, Earl of Richmond, last of the blood of Henry VI., disturbs his hard-earned repose. He would bribe the Duke of Brittany to give him up ; he sends legates laden with a great weight of gold to the duke, and bids them declare that he desires to form a marriage connection with Henry, and so utterly put an end to the party strife. He seemed to divine (says Polydore) that such an affinity would be formed ; but he meant to uproot Lancaster by murdering Henry. The inconsistency of two such thoughts is obvious ; but the mind of Polydore is full of that unspeakably happy event

* See the curious discussion on the burial of Henry VI., a. 1499, in Stanley's "Memoirs of Westminster," Appendix.

which filled the mind of all our Tudor writers, the wedding of Henry with the heiress of York. So he puts his *ex post facto* conceptions into the mind of Edward. The Duke of Brittany reluctantly yielded to the bribe, and handed over Henry like a sheep to the wolf; while he thought that he was handing over the son to the future father-in-law. So, again, in working out the theory of the Union of the Roses, confusion is introduced into the mind of the duke, who need not have been reluctant, had he believed in the honest intentions of Edward.

And then we are told that Henry knew he was being dragged to his doom, and that in his anxiety he fell into a fever at St. Maclou. A circumstantial story is told, with the most lively emotion, of how the good Lord John Chenlett heard the news, hastened to the duke, and by his representations succeeded in prevailing on him to countermand his orders, and to send Peter Landos to intercept Henry, who was found half-dead with terror, and was conveyed to a place of safety. In the eloquent speech put into the mouth of Chenlett, King Edward is alluded to as a torturer, a hangman, or a murderer in purpose. The friends of the Duke of Brittany will grieve to behold his noble name stained with eternal infamy by this act of treachery, the surrender of young Henry. "Peace, John," replies the duke, "you are mistaken; Edward desires Henry for his son-in-law." And Chenlett retorts, "On my word, illustrious duke, Henry is a dead man if he is suffered to quit your territories." One can imagine how Shakespeare might have elaborated the critical scene.

A compromise was arrived at, and Henry was kept under guard for three days. King Edward, meanwhile, was on the tenterhooks of anxiety; but hearing that

Henry was not at liberty, he turned his attention to other selfish interests. He suddenly ordered his brother, the Duke of Clarence, to be seized and put to death—as they say, in a cask of Cretan wine, a deed of unexampled horror. However, Polydore can state nothing certain as to the cause of the crime. It was but “30 or 40 years ago” at the time he began his inquiries. He had questioned “many who at that time were high in authority among the king’s counsellors,” but quite fruitlessly. They could not give him the correct tradition!

Fate of the
Duke of
Clarence.

The modern reader may well shudder at this calm declaration on the part of a witness, the sense of whose fairness grows upon us the more carefully we examine him. That so horrific a tale should have been allowed to circulate among the Lancastrians against the crowned head of the Yorkists is disgraceful enough. But that those who circulated it should not have had the wit to invent a plausible motive for the crime; that men of rank who recollected Edward could apparently believe him to have been a cruel fratricide, without evidence either of fact or of motive; that, in addition to this, they should believe the mode of the crime to have been fantastic beyond dreams; how can we meditate these things without disgust for the liars who were responsible for these Lancastrian romances?

But a cause or excuse must be invented. The fame went forth, about the year 1840, that King Edward had been terrified by the prophecy of a soothsayer, to the effect that Edward’s successor should have a name beginning with *G*. Under the influence of this devilish illusion he slew George; but the prophecy was fulfilled in the succession of the Duke of Gloucester. Another cause suggested was that there had been old hatred

between the brothers ; that the Duke of Clarence, on becoming a widower, sought through his sister Margaret the hand of Mary, only daughter of Charles of Burgundy. Edward was jealous of this alliance, and the old strife between the brothers was renewed. A servant of the Duke of Clarence was convicted of poisoning, and executed. The duke vehemently resented this as an act of injustice ; he was thrust into prison, condemned, "rightly or wrongly," for high treason, and executed.

Supposing Edward IV. to have been, as he is represented to have been, the actual murderer of his brother George, and the murderer in heart and deliberate intention of young Henry Tudor ; it may assuredly be said, "Such men never repent." But the Lancastrians say he did repent ; and their proof is, as usual, derived from imagination. He was wont to exclaim, when prayer was made for the life of a condemned person, "O my unhappy brother !" as if remembering that for *his* safety none had prayed, and so hinting that George had perished through hate. It was not until the days of John Selden that a few English and foreign writers began to puzzle themselves over the tale of the drowning of him in wine. A German professor thought it must be a figure of speech, describing George as a great toper.

The belief was that Edward would have established a reign of terror, had he lived. He died, however, of an obscure disease three years later, "having reconciled himself to God after the Christian fashion, whom he thought he had often offended by his sins." He left his two young sons to the guardianship of his brother Richard. His body was carried to Windsor Castle, and buried in the Temple of St. George.

It is probably to the canons of St. George, the saint of chivalrous devotion, that we owe the portrait of

Edward. Their style of art, it will be observed, differs much from that of the monks of the Order of St. Benedict. We should forget the murderous associations attaching to the name of Edward, and then we may admire the full-length picture of a gallant knight : tall of stature, open of countenance, bright-eyed, broad-chested ; quick of intelligence, high-hearted ; strong in memory, clever in business, prompt in danger, eager and honourable towards his foes, generous to his friends, fortunate in war. He was addicted to the pleasures of love, and had so much of mere *bonhomie* in private life that he hardly did justice to his majesty. There were suspicions in consequence that he died of poison. Towards the end of his life he glided into avarice ; yet he left the exhausted kingdom much richer than he found it, and was greatly regretted for his many virtues.*

However interesting the caprices of popular and political or clerical art may be, it must be admitted that we have no authentic portrait of Edward IV. in such descriptions. Still less have we any study from the life of that fascinating incarnation of wickedness, his brother, Richard III.

In the accounts of the latter we recognize that peculiar manner of writing which has been ascribed to Tacitus, and which inconsiderate readers mistake for "wonderful penetration into the recesses of the human heart." It is given to none to penetrate the recesses of his neighbour's heart, or perhaps of his own. It is, however, possible to conceive a human epitome and abstraction of vices, and to call this Tiberius or Richard III., or by any name you will. It is possible to make him think and

The portrait of Richard III.

* Polydore does not mention Jane Shore.

feel on every occasion as he ought or ought not to think and feel, and to call such writing biography. So Polydore, with his Lancastrian copy before him, proceeds to deal with Richard of York.

On hearing of the death of his brother, he is inflamed with the desire of becoming king ; but as he can find no honest excuse for such a design, he is forced to conceal and postpone it. He writes a letter full of kindness to Queen Elizabeth, consoling her and promising " seas and mountains " on his own behalf. The young Prince of Wales, Edward, is sent for from Ludlow to London to be proclaimed king. Richard meantime meets Henry, Duke of Buckingham, at Northampton ; and it was believed that an understanding was come to between them that Richard should be king.

Our chronicler proceeds to report for us the secret purposes of Richard's heart. He would seek first to effect his purpose by craft ; and if that failed, he would openly approach it. " It did not occur to the unhappy man that he could not sin without the greatest injury to the State and to his own house. So it happens to wicked men ; the violent dealing they intend for others comes back upon their own heads." The development of the ethical drama goes forward in strict accordance with this grand ethical principle. We are following an English analogue of the tale of Pelops' line. In the province of York men looked upon the old Tower of Pontefract with much the same feeling of awe and horror that the Londoners looked upon the Tower on " Tamise ripe." It could easily be believed, and it was believed, that within those gloomy walls, whence no cry could escape, the dark deeds of Richard had been done. One of his first acts, according to the tale, was to send some of the

Divination
of Richard's
heart.

Queen's party to Pomfret, from his halting-place at Stony Stratford.

The Londoners, on hearing of this, were filled with wonder and dismay. Queen Elizabeth fled to Westminster for asylum, with her son, the Marquess of Dorchester, and other nobles. Then Hastings, in jealousy of Dorchester and others of the Queen's party, gathers a party of Prince Edward's friends at St. Paul's. Some of them show the same power of divination of Richard's evil mind that was common among the Lancastrians. They were for a swift appeal to arms. The more prudent preferred to tarry until Richard should arrive and give an account of his proceedings. The Dukes of Gloucester and of Buckingham presently appear, and young Edward is placed in the house of the Bishop of London, hard by St. Paul's. Polydore's own house, in which he was writing down this story, was in the same quarter. One wonders whether he ever curiously visited the bishop's house in search of memories of the ill-fated boy.

But to proceed with the revelation of the secrets of Richard's breast. Though at the head of affairs, he was greatly distressed because he saw that he could not get possession of the person of his other nephew, young Richard, Duke of York, whom his mother had in safe keeping. He despaired of effecting his purpose, unless he could obtain possession of both the lads. He must therefore snatch Richard from the bosom of his mother. Violence being of no avail, he resorted to craft. He called together a large number of nobles. "May I perish," he exclaimed, "if I do not consult the advantage of my nephews; because I know that their calamity means that of the State as well as my own. When my brother Edward, our king, died, he appointed me governor of the kingdom. My first act was to come

hither, and to bring with me his elder son, Prince Edward, that all things might be done according to the mind of the Council. I have determined to do nothing without your authority. You shall be my associates and partners in affairs. Your testimony will be for me. Whatever I may hereafter do in the administration of the kingdom you will say that I have done all with the best faith, with a view to serve the State of Prince Edward. We believe you to be well aware that his father entrusted the care and tutelage of him to me for that reason.

“Now, Antony Rivers has lately attempted to hinder me in the discharge of this duty. I was forced to cast him and others into prison, that others might learn by their example to respect our commands. What shall I say of the evil counsels of men who always hated me, to Queen Elizabeth? She, for no just reason, has pretended to be afraid, and has dared to carry off the sons of a king into the one asylum on earth which is the refuge of the needy, of debtors and criminals, as if we were going to destroy them. The act is a dishonour to us and to the kingdom; yet we must make allowance for the sex, which is so liable to these crazes.”

Richard goes on to paint with glowing rhetoric the approaching spectacle of the Coronation, destined to be deprived of all its popular joy, if the mother and brother and sister of the young king shall be absent, trembling in their asylum. The people will greet their sovereign with groans rather than with cries of joy. They will begin to tremble for themselves, and to believe that all the majesty of the laws has been violated. Richard ended by urging that some of those present should approach the queen, and induce her to

return with her children to the palace, or, at least, to give up Richard on the public faith, that he might be present at the Coronation.

The nobles listened, suspected no fraud, and thought the proposals of Richard just and honest. The archbishop of Canterbury, the duke of Buckingham and John Howard waited on the queen, and endeavoured to prevail on her, with offers both of private and public faith, to return to the palace. Her soul was prophetic of ill, and she was inflexible. At last these lords persuaded her to surrender Richard to their custody. And so the innocent boy was torn from the embraces of his mother.

The reader will observe that we have to do here with speeches and with actions which are most becoming to the stage, but not with testimonies which were ever produced in an English court of law. You are supposed to be a spectator in the national theatre; you have the playbill in your hands; you know already the villain and the victims of the piece. You understand that the devilish uncle has already one nephew in his hands, and that he is certain to get possession of the other. Your expectations are fulfilled, and you receive a satisfactory theatrical pleasure. But if for a moment you assume the judicial cap, and try the case over in your own mind, you find it impossible to acquit or to condemn any of the parties concerned, simply because no proof is forthcoming, and because the tale resolves itself into one of the grossest improbability.

Richard then removed his two nephews from the bishop's house to the Tower—a proceeding which attracted no suspicion, because the custom was on the occasion of Coronations to bring forth the king thence in procession to Westminster. Yet, although his

contemporaries were blind to Richard's character, or were fascinated by his extraordinary eloquence, *we* enjoy the privilege of penetrating to the spring of his motives. The fire of ambition was glowing in his heart, but at the same time he was tormented by his guilty conscience, and his punishment was ever present to his mind. Restlessly he sought to soothe the multitude with largesses, to overcome his adversaries by bribes. Daily he was weaving new plots in the Tower, working on the minds of the nobles, delaying the public pomp, concealing his purpose from all but a few, who are supposed to have seen through his hypocrisy from the beginning.

But Hastings—a man, be it observed, of great popularity and influence with all ranks, and especially with all honest men—insists that there shall be no further delay with the Coronation. Richard resolves to put him out of the way, and having prepared an ambush in the adjoining room, summons a special Council to his presence. Among them were Thomas Rotherham, archbishop of York; John Morton, bishop of Ely; Henry, duke of Buckingham; Thomas Stanley, William Hastings, John Howard, and many others whom he could trust. The rest of the Optimates, or Great Men, with the Chancellor, John Russell, bishop of Lincoln, whom he was unwilling should be present at the dire spectacle, he ordered to attend at the Court of Westminster, that a day for the Coronation might be fixed.

Early in the morning the meeting was held in the Tower. Richard, with his usual theatrical eloquence, complained that his life was in danger. His health had been wasting for the last few days; he could enjoy neither food nor rest. He bared his arm, and showed

it all shrunken to the company. He denounced "that witch, Queen Elizabeth," as his poisoner, the active cause of his gradual dissolution. His remarks were thought to be irrelevant by his audience, and none replied. At last Hastings, as one who loved Richard and was on intimate terms with him, said that the queen should be branded with infamy, and should be severely punished, if it was proved that she had injured Richard's life by magic arts. "I say," repeated Richard, "that I am dying by the woman's foul acts." And on William's confirming his previous remark, the other raised his voice as a signal: "How now, William? Am I to perish by your ifs?"

Scarce had he spoken, when the assassins rushed in, seized William, both the Bishops, and Stanley. They were cast into different prisons, and William, hardly allowed time to be shriven, is beheaded. And here we listen to the solemn voice of the chorus of the drama, preaching an old moral. Thus did Hastings learn at last by his own peril that the law of Nature, according to the word of the Gospel, "*All things that ye would men should do unto you, do ye also unto them,*" cannot be violated with impunity. For he had been one of the assassins of Prince Edward, son of Henry VI. Oh, would that examples of such a kind might be a warning to men who think that their pleasure is their licence!

Through all the Tower were heard cries of Treason! Treason! The noise went through the city, and all the people believed this first report they heard, not knowing what had gone on within the walls. They echoed the cry, but when the terrific rumour had been dissipated, and they understood what had been done, a fresh panic set in. They who loved the sons of Edward deplored

the loss of Hastings, and looked for fresh victims to Richard's lust of power. But Richard held his hand for the time. He dismissed Thomas Stanley unhurt, fearing the popularity of his son, Lord Strange. He gave John Morton, bishop of Ely, into the custody of the duke of Buckingham, who sent him to his strong place near Brecknock. Rotherham, the archbishop of York, was given into the custody of Sir James Terell.

Richard then sent orders to Pomfret for the assassination of Antony Rivers, Richard Gray, and Thomas Waghams. In London he surrounded himself with a body of armed men, and gained over the great nobles either by bribes or by threats. He then devised means for influencing the imagination of the common people. Rodolph Shaw was a preacher at that time of great name. He was called to a secret conference by Richard, who expounded to him his hereditary right to the throne. He was, he said, the eldest son of Richard, Duke of York, and Cecilia his wife. Edward he declared to have been illegitimate. He proposed to Shaw that he should preach to the people on this topic at Paul's mound,* and lead them to the acknowledgment of their true prince. He tells this divine that he will rather cast a slur upon the memory of his own mother than suffer the kingdom to be debased any longer by a bastard stock of kings.

Shaw lends himself to this villainous scheme. On the day appointed, Richard, strongly escorted, goes in royal style to St. Paul's, and listens to the sermon with ears pricked up. Shaw takes "matter of tragedy and not of divinity" for the theme of his discourse. He argues that Edward IV. was not the son of the Duchess of York by her husband Richard. The latter was a

* Paulinum suggestum.

short, small-visaged man, an entire contrast to the tall and broad-faced Edward. The present Duke of Gloucester was evidently the genuine son and heir of the late Duke of York. Gloucester should be elected to the vacant throne.

The emotion that followed is depicted with poetic power. The audience were astounded at the revelation of the effrontery of the preacher and at the unspeakable wickedness of Richard, who could thus in public blast the memory of a virtuous mother, a kind brother, and inflict an eternal reproach upon his innocent nephews. They stood fixed in astonishment and in terror. Our narrator remarks that the fame went abroad that it was the sons of Edward IV., not Edward himself, who were denounced as illegitimate in that sermon. But Polydore flatly contradicts this opinion. He refers to many good princes who are yet living, to whom Cecilia complained of the false charge of adultery brought against her by her son Richard. After the sermon it was plain to all observers that he returned with his suite in joy to the Tower, as if he had been already proclaimed king. Shaw, the herald of these turpitudes, underwent a severe castigation at the hands of his friends, returned to a sound mind, repented of his deed, and soon died of grief.

Then comes the scene in the Common Council of London. The mayor, Robert Byles, the sheriffs, Thomas Norland and William Martyn, and the aldermen are bidden to assemble. The Duke of Buckingham is sent to them with other lords of the Council to plead the cause of Richard, and to request the decision of the City fathers. The duke repeats the statement that Edward IV. had defrauded Richard of the kingdom, and claims judgment in his favour. Such judgment would

not only be just, but politic, because of the high character of Richard, which would ensure the welfare of his subjects. The awe-struck audience listened in silence to this argument, and their silence was construed for assent.

Next day Richard made a progress from the Tower to Westminster, and for the first time took his seat upon the throne. The news was received with pleasure by the Lancastrian party throughout the country, and with displeasure even by the Yorkists, who detested the person of the usurper. The current of feeling began to set in favour of Henry of Richmond. Yet, so great must have been the magnetic powers of this bold bad man, he is able to call an army of 5000 men from York under the command of Richard Ratcliff. He is crowned early in July amidst the same hush of dismay.

He sets out for Gloucester on his way to York. The veil is again drawn from his heart, and we again inspect a conscience gnawed with guilt, and trembling with anxiety, yet goaded on from crime to crime, like another Macbeth. His nephews must die; he sends a despatch to Brackenbury, Governor of the Tower, bidding him effect this "in some honest manner." On arriving at York he is received by the citizens—strange to say—with gladness, and some days are spent in public rejoicings. There must have been something different in the moral climate of York from that of London. The rustics are gathered together to applaud the new sovereign; the archbishop appoints a solemn day of supplication, and the king with his queen proceeds to church, wearing his crown.

Meantime Brackenbury delayed the execution of his fell commission in the Tower of London. Terell is therefore despatched on the bloody errand, and puts

the boys to death in an almost unheard-of manner. Yet, adds our careful narrator, "the kind of death the wretched boys died is not clearly known." He dwells with the greatest believing sympathy on the grief of the people and the bereaved mother against this fearful enemy of God and man. And yet he exposes, in spite of himself, the *à priori*, or argument, which produced the dark tale. The deductive murder of these innocents was the vengeance of Heaven on the sin of the father, who had taken a false oath at the gates of York, and had murdered his brother George. It is the Lancastrian, or orthodox, theory of Yorkist wickedness which governs the whole representation.

Yet the knowledge of this horror of the Tower of London did not interfere with the thanksgivings, the prayers, in the cathedral of York, nor with the loud cheers of the populace, as Richard and his queen, leading her young Edward by the hand, passed on to the sacred edifice. Presently the boy is declared Prince of Wales, John Howard is made Duke of Norfolk, and his son Earl of Surrey. Thomas Hutton is sent to the Duke of Brittany to pray him still to keep Henry of Richmond in safe custody. The king returned to London, and found again a great change of climate.

Whenever bad weather set in or was threatened, the people set it down to the wickedness of Richard, which Heaven was avenging in their persons. The detested tyrant sank into deep melancholy. He resolved, if possible, to efface the stigma on his name. He must, by an effort of hypocrisy, engage in good works, and so lessen his unpopularity with men, and earn his pardon from God. He began many public and private works; he founded a college of a hundred priests at York. But

Richard's
changed
aspect at
York.

all was vain. His son Edward died in the third month after he had been made Prince of Wales, and a conspiracy broke out against him under the Duke of Buckingham.

The details of the quarrel furnish another illustration of the violent passions under the influence of which the Lancastrian tale was composed. The estate of the Earl of Hereford had descended in part to the family of Lancaster, in part to the Staffords, the originals of the House of Buckingham. On the extinction of the line of Henry VI., the Duke of Buckingham laid claim to the rest of the Hereford estate, which Richard now held by kingly right. "Do you think, Duke Henry," replied Richard, in wrath, "to claim the rights of Henry IV., who was a usurper?" Such was the rise of the quarrel. Buckingham went to Wales, and conspired with his prisoner, the Bishop of Ely, to bring over Henry of Richmond, and to wed him to Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV. Another story ran, that Buckingham had all along been the secret enemy of Richard. But transparent in all these retrospective fictions is the fixed Lancastrian idea—the fated wedding of the Two Roses—an idea that took root some years after the event.

But the details of the drama are all of interest. Margaret appears on the scene again, meditating the same profound design—how to mix the blood of Henry VI. and of Edward IV., and so put an end to the two factions. Through the agency of Lewis, the Welsh medic, Elizabeth, the queen dowager, is brought into the scheme, and the plot is developed by the assistance of others. They hear that Buckingham is working for the same object. All events are leading up to the arrival of Henry of Richmond, according to a Divine providence, as he readily believes.

Buckingham is betrayed, and meets his doom at Salisbury at the hands of Richard; the moral of which he is the martyr being that good never came of helping wicked men, especially of the Yorkist party. After many delays, Henry of Richmond enlists the help of the King of France and many English fugitives in that land, among them Richard Fox, an intimate friend of Henry, who enjoyed the bishopric of Winton at the time Polydore was writing. Meantime the wizard King Richard is actually able to prevail on Queen Elizabeth, mother of the murdered boys, to consent to his marriage with her daughter, so that he may circumvent the Lancastrians with their own toils. Therefore Richard's queen must die, and she falls a victim a few days after receiving the hypocritical kisses and soothing assurances of her lord, who then begins to prepare for his wedding with his own niece. The other daughter of the late king is disposed of by a marriage to an obscure "son of the soil."

Henry of Richmond must make haste, if he would secure Elizabeth, the indispensable condition of the Crown. We may omit the details of his campaign after landing at Haverford. We come to the eve of Bosworth field. It was easy to imagine, after classical examples, how terrible were Richard's dreams; how the horrific shapes of devils surrounded his restless couch; how he presaged the event of the morrow, and with pale countenance related his dream to many when he arose. "It was no dream," observes the chorus of the national drama, "but the conscience of guilt; conscience, I say, all the heavier, the greater the sin. At life's end, if at no other time, conscience will represent the memory of our ill deeds and their impending pains, so that, repenting of our evil life, we shall depart hence in sadness."

The battle next day is said to have lasted for more than two hours, with the loss, as usual in the battles of the period, of about 1000 ^{Bosworth} _{field.} to 100, or ten to one on the side of the vanquished. Richard is described as having fought with all the courage of a desperate man, who had staked his all on the event of the battle. His sudden and miserable end points the moral that such must be the fate of those who confound right and honour with their own self-will and impiety. These examples should be the greatest deterrents to men who have no leisure for aught but cruelty and crimes. The naked body of the tyrant was thrown upon a horse. So does hate, inspiring dramatic art, gloat upon the details of the last scene: his head, his arms, his legs, hang down on either side, as he is deported to the convent of the Franciscans, or Grey Friars, at Leicester. Two days later he was buried, without funeral rites.

Polydore sketches the conventional portrait of Richard, as it was to be copied over and over again by writers in the Tudor interest. Short of stature, deformed in body, one shoulder being higher than the other; of a small and truculent countenance, that seemed redolent of malice and to cry aloud of craft and fraud; he had a habit of incessantly biting his lips while engaged in thought, showing the savage nature that raged within his little body. He would half draw the dagger that he ever wore, and then restore it to its sheath again. His intellect is allowed to have been of a high order; although one does not see how he could have been like Catiline, so apt at simulation and dissimulation, if his evil countenance so evidently betrayed him. He is, moreover, allowed to have been of a haughty and undaunted courage, as his last moments showed.

As we read we seem to see the actor, over-made-up for his part, and with overstrained gestures, prowling over the stage. The description is theatrical beyond mistake; and perhaps, a hundred years before the great Master of the art, schoolboys were wont to act in the tragedy of Richard at the holiday festivities. The teaching of the dark fable was very effective against the Yorkist party in London; but whether it was equally acceptable in York is another question.

It was not to be expected that in this case the Grey Friars of Leicester should offer the visitors any other legend of a prince who had died and been carried to his grave under the ban and excommunication of the Church, and whose name has been connected with no Church foundation. Moreover, the Grey Friars were under the especial patronage of Henry Tudor. Not until the reign of James I. did George Buck take up his pen as an hereditary friend of Richard's party, to represent him as a pattern monarch and all but a saint. Late, also, were the historic doubts of Horace Walpole. The suspicion will haunt us that none but a man of extraordinary genius and great powers of personal attraction could have given rise to such a magnificent effort of detraction on the part of his foes. We must, however, resign the hope of attaining more than a general attention. The portrait of Richard is simply the monument of the passions of the victorious party in a long and fierce struggle for the possession of power.

CHAPTER VI.

POLYDORE VERGIL—*continued.*

POLYDORE was writing the life of Henry VII. perhaps about a quarter of a century after that king had passed away; and he writes it, as usual, not from records, but from reminiscences, and still more from *theories* current in his own time. Henry came to the throne by the will and providence of God, he says; because, 797 years before his accession, Cadwallader, last king of the Britons, had delivered an inspired prophecy to the effect that his stock should reign once more in the land. Henry VI. had repeated the tradition. It is an indirect witness on the part of Polydore to the fact that the dogma of the Regal Succession, the backbone of English story, dates from after the accession of Henry VII.

It was no more possible for Polydore to look back upon that time except through the medium of the regal dogma than it was possible for any monk to treat any part of history except as a deduction from the ecclesiastical dogma. Again and again we are reminded that the epoch of peace to the English people is the epoch of the union of the two equally rich and powerful families of York and Lancaster in one house, whence the royal stock should spring, the future possessors of the kingdom. But the whole evidence tends to show

that these prophecies after the event could not have been believed so long as pretenders continued to rise, and Henry's power remained precarious. We are told that Henry was the first of English kings who surrounded himself with a body-guard (of 50 men) in fear of assassination: an imitation of the French kings. How, then, can we conceive of a settled monarchy before his time? The kings must have been the temporary heads of what Hume calls a "Polish aristocracy."

To retrospection from the time of Henry VIII. it seemed that the reign of his predecessor had been anything but the beginning of a settled Constitution. A tradition there was of a fearful pestilence during the first year of that reign. As usual, the plague is magnified till it becomes the prophecy of his harsh rule, or that he would never draw a quiet breath till the last moment of his life. No sooner is he wedded to the lady of the White Rose, and crowned, than Lovell and other Ricardians, having escaped from asylum, begin to trouble him. Sedition is stirred both in York and Gloucester, and Bedford with difficulty succeeds in putting it down. However, Prince Arthur—the name that recalled the ancient Britons—is happily born the same year.

Then another ironical criticism on the blessed Union of the Roses is the tale of the immediately following sedition under the pretender Simnel. Polydore speaks of the whole plot with the greatest contempt, not observing how fatal are his admissions to the fine dogma of the establishment of the great regal House. A low-bred cunning priest, with his adroit pupil, form the brilliant design of making themselves respectively Primate of England and King.

Prophecies
after the
event.

The
pretender
Simnel.

The pupil is to personate one of the two sons of Edward IV., who are conveniently brought to life again in the popular imagination. Edward of Warwick, heir of murdered Clarence, is also, for the purposes of the plot, believed *not* to have perished in prison, as men had previously thought. Simnel must personate Edward, under the direction of his Oxford tutor. And the bait is easily swallowed in Ireland. The restless Margaret, sister of Edward IV., and Duchess of Burgundy, gladly promises her aid to the plotters against the detested Henry Tudor.

The king holds a Council in the cloister of the Carthusians at Richmond, from whom perhaps Polydore derived his particulars. So weak is his position, it is resolved to issue a general pardon to all capital offenders, and to parade the genuine son of the Duke of Clarence before the eyes of the people. Elizabeth, the queen-dowager, is also mulcted of all her possessions, because she had handed over her sons to Richard, and had lent herself to his project of wedding her daughter to him. Our moralist thinks that Elizabeth was hardly dealt with for her levity, because, he says, she increased the wrath of God against Richard, and brought on his ruin. One place will ever honour her memory, at all events. If you visit Queen's College, Cambridge, you will hear nothing but good of their founder and benefactress.

Henry, harassed between the dangers threatened from Ireland on the one hand, and from Flanders on the other, keeps watch on the eastern coast. He was doubtless well received among the Benedictines at St. Edmund's Bury. Thence he travels to Norwich and to Walsingham. On Christmas Day he enters the temple of the Blessed Virgin at that spot so famed for miracles

(as Erasmus, Polydore's friend, reminds us). He prays and performs his vows, so that by Divine help and the guidance of Mary he may be preserved from the snares of his enemies and defend the country from danger. In this connection it may not be irrelevant to mention the name of Walsingham, the historian, doubtless the contemporary of Polydore, but never named by him.

The quarrel is brought to a decision at the Battle of Battle of Stoke. Stoke, where, notwithstanding the bravery of the English soldiers under Lincoln and Lovell, of the Germans under Swart, and the Irish under Gerardin, Henry defeats them with a loss of 4000 men on their side, only half that number on his own. The valour of the Germans and the Irish being so specially extolled, we may perhaps understand how one Lancastrian was not on this occasion equal to more than two soldiers under the opposed banner. Simnel and his tutor are taken; the priest is condemned to perpetual imprisonment; while Simnel, as the mere tool of a party, is contemptuously appointed to the office of turnspit in the king's kitchen, and afterwards promoted to be the trainer of hawks. "Lambert is still living," says Polydore. But Lambert's reminiscences of the time have never been produced any more than those of Jane Shore, who (they say) was still living in the reign of Henry VIII. Margaret was profoundly disappointed by the failure of the expedition, and began to devise new plots against Henry. Supposing the tale to be in substance based on fact, we may amuse our fancy with the thought that the royal falconer, but for the fortune of war, might have been in the place of his vulgar-looking master, Henry VII., with an equally good title to the throne.

The clergy were busy in all the political intrigues of the time; and they have been the sole reporters of events from their own standpoint and in their own interests. It is they who tell us that Henry, after his victory, sent his standard to St. Mary's, Walsingham, in recognition of the aid of the Virgin. Watching from their secure retreats the turmoil of war, they prepared to profit by its results, to whichever side Fortune inclined. Cardinal Morton, Bishop of Ely, was from the year 1489 Chancellor and Primate, the actual governor of the country. Richard Fox, now Bishop of Exon, was employed as ambassador to Scotland; and bishops continued to be employed in such service during the Tudor period. A holy monk, Abbot of the Benedictine cloister at Abingdon, John Lily, who was at the same time a lawyer and a quaestor of the Pope, was employed in similar service to the Court of France. Amidst domestic troubles, the great remedy is to send for a Pope's legate. The constant embroilments of England, France, and Scotland were no doubt largely due to the annoying policy of the servants of the Christian Empire, *Divide et impera*.

The regular clergy and politics.

Morton and Fox.

An ecclesiastic who played an important part in 1490 was Hadrian Castello, who came hither on the errand of pacifying Scotland. He was too late, King James having been slain. Cardinal Morton and King Henry loaded this Hadrian with benefits with a view to secure his influence with the Popes, Innocent and Alexander VI. He enjoyed first the bishopric of Hereford, then that of Bath and Wells. On arriving in Rome he passed through all the degrees of honour. Innocent made him his Collector in England, Alexander VI. raised him to the Cardinalate with

the title of St. Chrysogonus. These distinctions, remarks the candid Polydore, are bestowed alike on the slothful and the energetic. The true and lasting praise of Hadrian consists in the fact that he was *so highly accomplished in Ciceronian Latin—in fact, the first of all the revivers of pure Latinity*. This incidental remark is of great value in connection with other evidence to the effect that the monks were not cultivating the classics until the latter half of the fifteenth century.

It was at that time, as Polydore himself says, that the Italian scholars, dispersed from their own land by the terrible discords which there prevailed, and of which he has given a most feeling description, came into Germany, Flanders, and England. We should have been grateful to him had he given us more details on this subject and on the general state of learning. We could well be spared the monotonous recital of the plots and counterplots of factions, the insurrections, the battles, the executions, the barbarisms which constitute, to the view of the historians of the time, the state of Europe. It is not that they can have been wholly uninterested in the progress of the arts and sciences, but that these were in their feeble and almost unheeded infancy, cradled in so stormy a time.

Margaret of Burgundy persevered in her design of harassing the successful enemy of her house. It is utterly impossible to detect the germ whether of truth or fiction in the tale of the new pretender, who threw Flanders, England, Ireland, and Scotland into commotion. Polydore tells the tale from the Lancastrian side, and yet fairly, as one who knew that the Yorkists had much to say in their defence. But victory in argument must follow victory in arms.

Dispersion
of Italian
scholars.

The Lancastrians might say, when they were weary of taunting the duchess with having brought forth two monsters within a few years—Lambert and Peter—“The burden of proof rests with you. What have you to show against the title of the king in possession?” And Margaret might retort, “It is rather with you that the burden rests. You have set up a usurper, the son of an illegitimate Beaufort, whose title to the English throne has never been proved. We defend the hereditary right of York.” When it came to the question of whether the young man put forward as Richard, son of Edward IV., was indeed the genuine son of that king, the Lancastrians showed uneasiness. They sent agents into Flanders, and said they had identified him as Peter (or in derision Peterkin) Warbeck of Tournay. But after all, the argument on which they most relied was their own dogma, that Richard III. was a murderer, and had actually slain his elder nephew. Was it likely that he would have spared the younger? But their argument was founded on a *petitio principii*; for they had never proved that Richard was an assassin.

Notwithstanding the smoothness of the Lancastrian tale, the partisans of that house do not and cannot conceal the fact that in Kent, as well as in the North, the people were easily to be excited to take up arms in the rival cause. The clergy were also divided. Among the conspirators brought to London in consequence of information received in Flanders were the Dean of St. Paul's, two Dominican friars, and others of sacerdotal rank. The fate of William Stanley, who had saved Henry's life at Bosworth, seems to have been felt to call for apology. He fell a victim to the informer Robert Clifford. But the only excuse that can be offered for Henry's ingratitude is that Stanley presumed too much

on his past services, and in disappointment of their recognition went over to the opposite side.

When it is found necessary to raise money for war against Scotland, which has taken up the cause of the Pretender, the Cornishmen, unable to endure the tax, take up arms. They cast the blame of these wretched wars and this intolerable oppression on the king's counsellors, especially Archbishop Morton and Reginald Bray. Polydore takes occasion to observe that if any good is done, it is placed to the credit of the king; if any evil, to that of his counsellors: an observation perhaps inspired by Morton himself. The march of the poor Cornish miners to Wells, to Salisbury, Winton, and so into Kent is described. They are disappointed of the assistance of the Kentishmen, who, warned by their past sufferings, flee before them, refusing even to hold a parley with the rebels; for the Earl of Kent and other lords were under arms, and their bold spirit was subdued. Nothing daunted, the Cornishmen advanced to Blackheath, and spread terror through London. Henry marches against them, slaughters 2000 rebels, takes an immense number prisoners at the expense of 300 lives on his own side. Such was the fury of the Cornishmen who remained at home, that Henry dared not send the bodies of the two ringleaders, Flammock and Joseph, to be cut up and suspended in different parts of the county, as he had intended to do.

A little later they rallied under the Pretender, who had left the Court of Scotland in consequence of the influences brought to bear on James by Ferdinand of Spain. The Pretender lays siege to Exeter. On the advance of Henry's force he takes sanctuary in the monastery of Beaulieu, where he is captured. On the way back to London the excitement of the multitude is

intense; all crowd to look upon the young man, who has been able, without any real pretensions, to win over so many princes and peoples to his support. In Devon and Somerset there had been many supporters of the rebellion. Sir Amias Paulett, and Sherburn, dean of St. Paul's, are sent down to punish, by means of heavy fines, all who had been implicated in it.

An illustration of the manner in which English history was made and then written by the same class of men may be found in the circumstances leading to the betrothal of the Princess Margaret to James of Scotland. There had been a dispute between young English and Scotch soldiers at Norham Castle. Some of the Scots had been slain, and the wrath of King James was aroused. Richard, the active Bishop of Durham, who was the commander of the English soldiers, endeavoured to pacify King James, and gained permission from King Henry to accept an invitation from the Scottish monarch to a conference. At Melrose, in the famed cloister of the Cistercians, the meeting took place. James confided to the bishop in secret, apart from all witnesses, his project for cementing an alliance with Henry by wedding Margaret. Henry is delighted with the proposal, which, after due formalities, is carried before the Council.

The betrothal of Princess Margaret.

Polydore says that on this occasion there were some counsellors who showed hesitation. The inheritance of the kingdom might come to Margaret, and they thought it should not go to a foreign prince. Henry is reported to have answered, "What then? Suppose such a thing should happen—which God forbid!—I foresee no loss to our kingdom. The accession of Scotland to England, not of England to Scotland, would be the result. England is the noblest part and the head of the whole

island. The smaller part should be made to increase the honour and glory of the greater: just as in days gone by Normandy came into the power and authority of our English ancestors." Such was the dictum of the wise king, and with unanimous approbation Margaret was betrothed to James.

A king like Henry VII., who had been taught by his clerical friends to regard himself as a living fulfilment of ancient British prophecy, might well be conscious of a like afflatus at such a moment. But without discussing too curiously the historical learning or the prophetic gifts of Henry, it is tolerably clear that the above passage was written down at a time when it was desirable to make the prospect of a Scottish successor to the English throne agreeable to those who had any voice in such matters. These events are said to have occurred in the year 1499.

The same year the Pretender, Peter Warbeck, attempts to escape from prison, and takes refuge with the Carthusians at Bethlehem monastery. The prior is said to have gone to the king and to have interceded for the young man's life. Peter is loaded with chains and cast into the Tower. There he becomes acquainted with the poor innocent, Edward, Earl of Warwick, "who did not know a hen from a goose," and who is dragged to destruction by another's crime. An Augustinian monk named Patrick tells a pupil of his that he will gain the kingdom for him if he will follow his advice. This disciple, crazed by an ambition which was common, and which defied all law and all danger, eagerly enters into the plot. The pair set out for Kent, and the young man gives himself out for Edward, Earl of Warwick, lately escaped from the Tower by Patrick's aid. The tale was believed, but the new

sedition "lost its head before it was raised." The friar and his disciple were seized, the latter was slain, the former in respect for his sacred character was spared for the doom of "eternal darkness" in prison.

Polydore always speaks of the Augustinians, Franciscans, and Dominicans, as monks. So great respect, he says, do the English show the Order, that even a priest who is condemned for high treason, or other guilty person, members of other Orders, have their lives spared. By long custom, the bishop has no cognizance of such criminal cases. They are not permitted to desecrate priestly criminals; and unless they are desecrated they cannot be put to death.

The custom also is, that those who can read, if condemned for any crime except high treason, enjoy the same privilege, because they are considered as almost ordained persons. They are kept in custody; if they escape they are branded in the left palm, the homicide with the letter M for murderer, the thief with the letter T. If again detected, these branded ones are then put to death.

The privileges of letters.

It is an example of the vagueness of Polydore's knowledge of English laws when he says that Henry was the author of the above institute in a Council of the second year of his reign, and that Henry borrowed it from the French, as he believes. The custom with the French is to cut off one of the ears of the malefactors. Bishops have the custody of prisoners, that the privileges of clerks may be preserved; and they are fined if a prisoner is suffered to escape through negligence. Polydore observes that this practice directly fosters and encourages thieves. The means of escape are innumerable; and criminals are poured out upon society. There is no public prosecutor; and if the

offended or injured person does not pursue his action, the accused goes free from the first, according to the law of the land.

The Pretender plotted his escape from prison along with the Earl of Warwick. The plot was discovered; he, with his associates, were brought up for judgment and condemned. A few days later, the young man, whose name has been handed down as Peter Warbeck, was hanged with his accomplices. The Earl of Warwick was beheaded on the mere ground, as rumour went, that he had attempted flight. This was a capital offence, according to the laws of the time. It was also believed that the Austin friar had designed, by his scheme, to bring suspicion upon the poor half-witted boy. The whole tale needs no comment; it is one of a multitude of proofs of the absence of all defined personal rights in England, and of the positive tyranny that prevailed, at a time when the lawyers began to talk of the privileges conferred by the Great Charter.

We come to the last year of this terrible age, fitly marked by a great plague which carried off 30,000 lives in London alone. According to reasonable computation, this might be about half the population; but the figures are not to be trusted. There was also a great fire at Henry's villa on the Thames, which he rebuilt and called Richmond, because he had formerly been earl of that region. He went over to Calais to avoid the plague; renewed his treaty with Philip of Flanders, and returned to England on the abatement of the pestilence. Gaspar Pons, the Spaniard, arrived on a mission from Pope Alexander, in order "to show the English the road that leads to heaven." The Jubilee was celebrated at Rome. Legates came, bearing

the boon of celestial grace to Christians who were hindered from visiting Rome.

Our candid ecclesiastic, himself a minister of Pope Alexander, tells us that the grace of heaven was not imparted gratuitously. Alexander thought that he might himself consult the salvation of man and his own interests at the same time. He fixed a price upon the Grace, and declared that he would shortly undertake a war against the Turks. A great sum of money was collected; but though the Turks went on taking town after town, the war was not begun.

In the midst of the terrible desolation of London, it seems that the citizens could summon up their festive spirits to celebrate the wedding of ^{Royal} the Princess Margaret with James of Scotland, and of Prince Arthur with Catherine, daughter of Ferdinand of Spain. Yet the royal joy was immediately overdarkened by the dread of a new conspiracy. Edmund Pole, of Suffolk, nephew of Edward IV., had slain a commoner, and had been brought up for trial. The king spared his life. But the haughty spirit of Pole, resenting his trial as a disgrace, fled to his aunt Margaret in Flanders without the royal licence. But this offence was also overlooked, and he returned to England, only to pay another visit to Flanders with his brother Richard, while Henry and all London were occupied with the nuptials of Arthur. Another Yorkist plot came to light, in which young Courtenay, of Devon, son-in-law of Edward IV., and a third brother of the Pole family were believed to be engaged; also James Terell. Courtenay was imprisoned on mere suspicion, and was only released by Henry VIII. William Pole obtained at the same time an easier custody. His character was of the purest. James Terell and John

Wyndham were put to death. Edmund Pole, after wanderings on the Continent, gave himself up to Philip of Flanders. Richard continued also to weather the storm.

It has already been hinted that the religious houses and sanctuaries must have been conscious of all these conspiracies. Henry VII., we are informed, knew that members of the opposite party were still hiding in these retreats. And yet he dared not take strong measures to suppress the hotbeds of rebellion, without reference to the Pope. In response to an application by letters and legates, Alexander VI. exerted his authority, and declared all English exiles enemies of religion, because disturbers of the people. Those who had once quitted asylums were not again to be received to its privileges. In the result, many returned to a sound mind, and those who were in safety refrained from exposing themselves to further peril.

These anxieties are no sooner set at rest in Henry's mind than he is plunged into grief by the death of Arthur, in the fifth month of his marriage. According to the habit of the time, it is supposed that Catherine had presage of the unhappy event of her marriage, because she had had a stormy voyage from Spain to England. The Queen Elizabeth died shortly after, having given birth to a daughter, who lived but a few days. Reginald Bray, the true Father of his Country, the faithful monitor of King Henry, followed the queen to heaven. Morton, the other faithful counsellor, had been dead two years. Polydore is warm in his praises of these men. He is well aware that the vulgar held the contrary opinion of them as corrupters of the mind of the king. The

The religious houses as centres of sedition.

Death of Arthur.

true temper and training of the ecclesiastic are manifest in Polydore, when he abruptly observes that the vulgar are always with the wrong, and that the king, so long as he patiently listens to the monitors of his duty, can do no wrong. It was in the year 1502 that Henry held a Council, the only constitution of which given is that concerning thieves and murderers, who had the privilege of the "Three Letters"—that is, who can read; they were to be branded, as was mentioned above.

When shall we turn the last page of these "rude wars, nefarious seditions, massacres, and executions"? Advancing into the year 1503, it is only to meet with new varieties of suffering on the part of an unhappy king and his unhappy subjects. Henry was now stricken in years. Painful experience had taught him to dread civil war more than death; and he cast about for the means of providing against the recurrence of such ills. He conceived that this end might be secured were he to reduce the strength of his subjects a little; being aware, in his great wisdom, that riches produce insolence, and that the fear of losing or the hope of gaining wealth are very strong motives of human nature. At the same time, he was careful of his reputation for justice, and was anxious to devise some honest cloke for his design. While brooding over this question, it occurred to him that his Englishmen had fallen into neglect of "the accepted laws." Suppose an Inquisition were held on this matter? The certain result would be that a vast number of the Great Men, also of the merchants, craftsmen, advocates, herdsmen, might be caught in the violation of the said "accepted laws." The king rose from his studies, resolved to carry out this design.

Domestic
policy of
Henry.

The Royal
Inquisition.

He began to recognize "the laws," and to inflict

slight fines on those who had not kept them. He then appointed two Fiscal Judges, Richard Hemson, and Edmund Dudley, who were lawyers. The reader may be reminded that the study of Law and the invention of the fictions about the origin of English Law were but beginning during this reign. These men vied with one another in the endeavour to ingratiate themselves with the king. They surrounded themselves with a band of informers, who supplied them with the names of suspect persons. In their eagerness to raise money they were reckless of danger, contemptuous of humanity. The leading men, however, warned them to keep their hands off. A great sum of money was made by the king, who could then afford to remember pity toward his suffering people, whose cries were directed to Heaven. He bethought him of clemency, humanity, and grace; and resolved to dismiss the two judges, and to restore the moneys which had been unjustly exacted.

In 1505 a prophetic incident occurred. Philip of Flanders had wedded Joanna of Castile, who had become heiress of that kingdom. Philip set out with his consort for Spain, but was driven ashore by a storm at the English port called by Polydore, Wynmouth. Worn out with fatigue and sea-sickness, Philip landed from a boat and cast himself headlong upon the earth, in spite of the warnings of his suite, who appear to have foreseen that the descent would cause the vexation of a longer delay. The English nobles of the Coast prepared to resist an enemy, but on learning that it was a friend, they invited King Philip to the house of Sir Thomas Trencherd. Sir Thomas despatched a swift post to King Henry with the news; and Philip was prevailed upon, by hospitable persuasion or by fear, to remain till Henry should arrive. A meeting was at

last arranged at Windsor Castle. Philip was prevailed upon to deliver up Edmund Pole, on the promise of Henry that his life should be spared. Then Henry insists upon taking his reluctant guest to London.

Polydore is not lavish of prodigies, yet he cannot altogether free his mind from the confusion of facts with fancies, which was the habit of his time. Philip, shortly after these events, died in Spain. And then the people began to talk about the storm that blew him on these shores, and they began to remember that a brass eagle fixed on the top of St. Paul's as a weathercock had been blown down, and had in its fall broken another eagle, the sign of a tavern hard by; and how the religious observers of such portents were persuaded that the Imperial Eagle would come to grief. Certainly the Emperor Max had lost his son; but as to the history of the weathercocks of St. Paul's from early times, such researches may be left to the learned.

The lingering embers of Pole's conspiracy continued to trouble Henry; and the return of the terrible sweating sickness was symptomatic of a physical state not less deplorable than that of the body social and political. But medical remedies had made some progress, and men were beginning to have some conception of the need of an established Right in England. The language of Polydore should here be brought into strong emphasis. A third pestilence, he says, suddenly broke out. By the operation of the fiscal judges, gradually a very large number of the wealthier citizens were deprived of their rights as Englishmen. The thing is strange to speak of; the facts are wretched; "but men call that Law or Right which is the perversion of Right and the corruption of Judgment." An absent person is summoned before the judges. He knows

Absence of
right and
law.

naught of what is going on. He has to appear on a fixed day ; he fails to answer to his name when it is called in court. How is he to answer, being ignorant of the whole business, and often a hundred or two hundred miles away ? Then he is condemned, is deprived of all his goods, and handed over to perpetual chains as the enemy of his country. His property is confiscated to the Prince. These condemned persons are commonly called *Outlaws*—that is, men deprived of all rights of their country given by law to a man. By such acts a multitude of Englishmen were circumvented !

It is in the light of facts like these that we begin to understand by what idle figures of speech we have been deceived, when our historians have talked of the growth of the English Constitution and the Palladium of our liberties. No sooner do we hear of rights founded on law as theoretically admitted, than they are actually and contemptuously denied by the very guardians of those rights and the interpreters of the majesty of the law itself. It is in the light of such a witness that we understand how the very names of law, judge, sheriff, bishop, were greeted with deep curses by the mass of Englishmen, and how the passionate love of the people's heart flowed forth to the ideal Outlaw of Sherwood, whom poetic fancy referred, with other English ideals, to a much older age, in reality the reflection of this lawless fifteenth century.

It is with the greatest pleasure that I recognize in a Roman clergyman like Polydore Vergil so sincere and glowing an indignation against the iniquity of such an administration. And yet the blame of it must fall in largest part on the shoulders of the Hierarchy. We do not hear of a word of protest or remonstrance being raised against these gross violations of the first

precepts of the Gospel by either the Pontiff or any of the Bishops. It is the clergy who have made the laws in the interests of their Order ; it is the clergy who sit in the seat of injustice ; and the clergy who are shielded, even when they bear upon them the stain of crime.

Alexander VI. was succeeded in the Chair of St. Peter by Pius III., who had long been " Protector of the realm of England " at the Papal Court, by the appointment of Henry VII. The king sent a knight, William Talbot, with the Abbot of Glastonbury and the Dean of St. Paul's, to congratulate the new pontiff, who, however, died before the deputation arrived in Rome. Julius II. succeeded him ; and the embassy which carried the royal congratulations were commanded to deliver the vestment of the Order of the Garter to Guido Ubald, Duke of Urbino. About the same time Richard, bishop of Winton, is despatched to Calais to negotiate the betrothal of the Princess Mary, then ten years of age, to Charles of Castile. The meagre narrative has now passed over the events of seven years in about three pages.

We come to the end of a period of three years, supposed to be fatal to the king. He felt his health to be languishing ; and, desirous to win the goodwill of the people by an act of gratuitous liberality, he published an edict of universal pardon to all who had broken the laws, except thieves and murderers. For these last had not injured him, but their neighbours. The conception of Law was therefore the expression of the king's will, and the violation of it an offence against himself. It may be fairly said that to think of the Law as something agreed on by all classes of the people through their representatives, and binding on all by common consent, was foreign to the mind of

Englishmen. Their sovereign lord the king was a being endowed with the usual attributes of an Oriental despot in the teaching of the clergy, whose ideas were derived from Oriental models.

Henry died at Richmond in 1509, and was buried in the chapel he had built at Westminster, leaving three out of eight children behind him—Henry, Prince of Wales, Margaret, and Mary. Polydore furnishes us with the conventional portrait of Henry, in which his extraordinary “wisdom” is brought into remarkable emphasis. The portrait may be compared in general with that of Louis XI., as illustrating a contemporary mode of art. It is conceived, on the whole, in a flattering temper, and can hardly be received, considering the barrenness of authentic sources, as one of great fidelity to the original. When it is said that Henry hated pride and arrogance, and that he would not brook the rivalry of any will with his own, not even that of his highly sagacious mother, and that he used to say “he would rule, not be ruled:” we infer that the general impression left behind was that of a strong man, who wielded the sceptre with severe regard to justice, yet with relentings to mercy. But it is a very ironical commentary on the theories of a constitutional Government during this reign that it should be said of the king, he allowed the people to be bled by the fiscal judges to put down their ferocity. When they were nearly faint to death, he would relieve them, and “let their feathers grow again.”

The tales of incessant plots, insurrections, and fearful massacre on Blackheath, the arbitrary imprisonments and confiscations, all show that there was not, and could not have been as yet, any strong Government, in the proper sense of the word, in England; but that all

things tended, if a stable monarchy were to be erected at all, to an absolute tyranny. In despair of arriving at any certainty as to the true character of Henry, we may regard him as a soldier of fortune who profited by the general movement in Europe towards a settled system of government, after long and wasteful civil strife. It is no doubt not by mere convenience that we think of the Middle Ages as drawing to an end. The craze for fruitless expeditions to the East was subsiding; and the more steady interests of legitimate commerce, with the acquisition of wealth, and all the tastes that wealth brings in its train, created a demand for law and order. But the response to this demand came in the shape of experiments in tyranny, which were to run their course during the following century.

The clergy who have darkened and damned the memory of the Yorkist princes have done their best to convert the founder of the Tudor monarchy into a saint. The Franciscan Friars have been especially eager to honour his memory as the founder of three convents of the Observants, one at Richmond, one at Greenwich, a third at Newark. The other family of the same Order, the Conventuals, assigned their houses at Canterbury, Newcastle, and Southampton to his donation. It is probably an echo of the praises of the Friars that we read in Polydore, who cannot doubt that so glorious a king has returned to heaven that he may enjoy eternity, in reward for his diligent practice of religious duties.

Henry and
the Fran-
ciscans.

No business was suffered to detain him from the sacred office. He heard two or three "*masses, as we call them*" (says Polydore) daily, and sermons often. He gave alms in secret, according to the precept of Christ, and he had a royal almoner. He prayed much,

and especially on feast days recited the Canonical Hours. But, not relying on his own prayers, he was aided by priests of every order, and bestowed upon them great largesses, that they might pray for him and for the whole kingdom. An annual income was assigned for the rite of prayers on behalf of his soul. He gave direction in his will, that monies unjustly obtained by the fiscal judges should be restored, and that the Savoy Hospital for the poor should be completed. This work was hindered, says Polydore, by the violent demands made for restitution by men who had suffered from heavy fines. The lesson is, remarks the moralist, that when we have goods to distribute we should do it "with our own, and not another's hand." The scene which followed on the accession of the new king, when a clamorous multitude thronged the royal gates, demanding not only restitution of goods, but the lives of Hemson and Dudley, who were sacrificed to their vengeance, is an ironical commentary on the memory of the sainted king.

The closing page of Polydore's twenty-sixth book thus reminds us, and in a very emphatic, if indirect way, that the study of the history of our country is involved in the study of the rise of English Letters; and this again in the study of Italian Letters during the fifteenth century. It will be found that Polydore has given us all the essential information on this subject; and that if later writers appear to know more, it is because they resorted to pure invention, and because every name that had been puffed into greatness by the adulation of scholars became still greater with the lapse of time, as a variety of interested fables were gathered around it. The fact remains, and should be insisted on, all the more because the imagination, in spite of

ourselves, recoils with pain from the thought of utter darkness: that the ignorance in England was almost inconceivably dense; the English fancy, on the other hand, extremely excitable and inventive at the beginning of the sixteenth century. During the whole of that age the English mind continued in that habit. Lying became a fine art in the service of political and ecclesiastical interests.

Some writers, as Hume and Hallam, have preferred the "Life of Henry VII." ascribed to Francis Bacon to the more slender narrative of Polydore. But Francis Bacon, writing for the pleasure of King James and Prince Charles, had discovered no fresh material for history. He admits that he is at a great distance from his object, and that his light is but uncertain. The additions he makes to Polydore are either drawn from spurious Records, or are of his own imagination. Hallam has noticed some inconsistencies in the account of the pretended laws of "the wise king." Supposing the life to have been actually written by Bacon, and not far from the time of his disgrace, it may reflect the subserviency of the courtier, but the reasoning is that of the advocate and the sophist. While Polydore seems to think that the title of Henry to the crown rested merely on ancient British prophecy, Bacon is fulsome on the subject, and makes out five titles for Henry, each of them bad; but together constituting what he calls a wreath of titles. The philosopher—if he it was—thinks that five bad reasons, if added together, will produce one good one. It was reserved for another distinguished lawyer, Chief Justice Blackstone, to rend asunder the web of fiction about Henry Tudor's title. He was a violent usurper; nothing could conceal that fact from the conscience of the English people. His fictitious

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prototype, Henry IV., was also a violent usurper, as Polydore calls him, and he is fitly traced to a fictitious ancestor Edmund, son of Henry III.

Polydore is merely a witness for the fact that the common people in the beginning of the sixteenth century still call the two great Houses the Two Roses. The literary fictions on this subject were but beginning in his time; and it is one of the many curious illustrations of the effect of dogma on invention that Bacon should venture to say Henry never truly loved his White Rose queen, who bore him so many children; because he could not surmount his inveterate Lancastrian antipathies. Curious, again, it is to note the influence of the same dogma on the kindred art of painting. We have no portrait on canvas or panel of Henry VII. that can be regarded as authentic, or taken from the life. There is, however, a large half-mythological painting by Jan de Mabuse, which represents the nuptials of Henry with Elizabeth.

The artist has followed the clerical ideal of Henry.

Picture by de Mabuse. The king has a slender, almost emaciated form; in appropriate dress he would pass for a monk and an ascetic. Instead of advancing with joy to meet his bride, he stands in a reluctant attitude, his eyes cast to the ground; while the pleasant English face of the Yorkist heiress confronts the spectator. A portentous saint or prelate of almost superhuman stature imposes from the background on your gaze.

The picture was lent by Mrs. Dent of Sudely to the Tudor Exhibition of 1890. It was formerly in the Strawberry Hill collection, and Horace Walpole thus describes it: "On one hand, in the foreground, stand the king and the Bishop of Imola, who pronounced the nuptial benediction. His Majesty is a trist, lean,

ungracious figure, with a downcast look, very expressive of his mean temper, and of the little satisfaction he had in the match. Opposite to the bishop is the queen, a buxom, well-looking damsel, with golden hair. By her is a figure above all proportion with the rest, unless intended, as I imagine, for an emblematic personage, and designed from its lofty stature to give an idea of something above human. It is an elderly man, dressed like a monk, except that his habit is green, his feet bare, and a spear in his hand. As the frock of no religious order ever was green, this cannot be meant for a friar. Probably it is St. Thomas, represented, as in the martyrologies, with the instrument of his death. The queen might have some devotion to that peculiar saint, or might be born or married on his festival."

Another example of the ecclesiastical literary art of the early sixteenth century is the portrait of the Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond, assigned to the pen of her Con-
Fisher's portrait of the Lady Margaret.
 fessor John Fisher, who became Bishop of Rochester. There seems little reason to doubt that his funeral sermon in her honour was written down about the year 1509. It offers many valuable incidental illustrations of the habit of the clerical imagination at that epoch. Martha in the Gospel is taken for the prototype of the Lady Margaret, and Martha is thought of as a noble lady of the feudal time, who has inherited the "Castle of Bethany."

The lineal descent of the countess is duly asserted from King Edward III. It is then shown that she had not only nobleness of blood, but also of manners and of nature. Her intelligence and her learning are highly praised. She is said to have possessed a great number of books both in English and French. She translated

devotional books from French into English. She regretted that her knowledge of Latin was slight; nevertheless she could follow the Rubric of the Ordinal of the Mass.

In the ninth year of her age, when her betrothal to the Earl of Richmond was proposed, she was taught to commend herself to St. Nicholas, the patron and helper of all true maidens. In answer to her prayers, on the eve of her day of decision, the saint appeared to her, arrayed in his episcopal attire, and bade her take Edmond for her husband. And thus her mind inclined to him. By lineage and by affinity she had thirty kings and queens within the four degrees of marriage to her, beside earls, marquises, dukes, and princes.

It is upon her devotion especially that the Cardinal loves minutely to dwell: her faithful observance of the fast of Lent, her painful wearing of shirts and girdles of hair on certain days of the week. The greater part of each morning from soon after five till ten or eleven, was occupied with matins and with masses. After dinner, the stations to three altars were duly gone, the dirges and commendations and the evensongs were said. She brought pain and disease upon herself by constant kneeling; yet daily when she was in health she said "the Crown of our Lady," which demanded sixty-three genuflexions. When wearied of prayer, she betook herself to her French books of devotion. Marvellous was her weeping about every third day, and especially when she was houseld, which was nearly a dozen times a year.

To these descriptions correspond the few extant paintings which are supposed to represent the Lady Margaret in ecclesiastical attire, almost as a nun. The overcharged and affected style of such representations

displease the eye of the lover of Nature; while the admirer of the worth of Englishwomen is offended by the attempt to bring them into so abject a submission to clerical domination. And then again the irony of History will force itself upon us when we recall that the domestic relations of this very Beaufort-Tudor family, over whom the priesthood is said to have acquired so enormous an ascendancy, are to cause the greatest disaster to the sacerdotal interest in England.

The praises of learned men in England during the reign of Henry VII. are much exaggerated. And when we look for more exact information concerning the life and work of Colet and his contemporaries in other sources it is still rhetorical flourish and adulation rather than impressive facts that are offered to us. There are, for example, in the letter of Erasmus to Jodocus Jonas, eulogies of John Colet, from ^{Erasmus' letters.} which a few particulars may be gleaned, in addition to those in Polydore.

Greek was all but unknown at Oxon. It was positively discouraged by the Churchmen. The saying ran, according to Erasmus' "Adages," "Beware of Greek, lest you become a heretic, and of Hebrew, lest you become like unto the Jews." Little of the writings of the Benedictines called the "Fathers" was as yet studied in England. It was abroad that Colet is said to have studied "Dionysius, Origen, Cyprian, Ambrose, and Jerome." Erasmus, or the writer of the letter above named, applauds him for his contempt of the writings ascribed to St. Austin. He sometimes looked into Scotus and Aquinas. He was also read in Church History and in such English poets as were then extant.

It is Erasmus who confirms Polydore upon the

merits of Colet as an expositor of Paul's epistles, perhaps from the year 1497. So great was the novelty of such readings, that Abbots and other dignitaries came to hear him at Oxon. He also established a similar lecture in St. Paul's, London. He is said to have drawn upon him the evil eye of the Bishop Fitzjames, because of his attacks on the abuses of the Church. He denounced, it is said, the worship of images, and this was an article against him. A curious particular of New Testament exegesis is given in reference to his alleged attacks on the temporal possessions and power of the Bishops. It was pretended on their side that the command of Christ to St. Peter—*Feed my sheep*—was to be understood of the duty of hospitality. This Colet denied, arguing that the Apostles were poor and should not practise hospitality. The text must be understood of a good life and doctrine. In general, it may be understood that Colet was one of the first Biblical professors of whom we have any historical knowledge. And the mystery of the Theological Reformation is essentially part of the mystery of the Pauline epistles. But the unprincipled zeal of Bale, the ex-Carmelite friar, who joined the Protestants in the late sixteenth century, has ascribed many things to Colet which are quite unhistorical.

It is necessary at every point in the inquiry to guard ourselves against the illusions which are begotten by listening to the large and exaggerated talk of the flourishing state of letters and the tales of great scholars. If faith came by hearing, we might indeed refuse to disbelieve these representations. But we have the power, by the aid of a little patience, of providing ourselves with an historical telescope, and of penetrating

the interior of libraries, whose scanty contents at the end of the fifteenth century reveal the actual state of things. The mere ignorance of the Bible among the only learned class is a fairly correct gauge of the state of culture. It is a typical fact when we learn that to Luther and his brotherhood, the Austin friars, the Bible was a novel book.

CHAPTER VII.

JOHN LELAND.

I HAVE now to call the attention of the reader to a Witness of the greatest importance in reference to the state of Letters in England during the reign of Henry VIII. I refer to John Leland. It is probable that he was born late in the reign of the first Tudor prince; but, as I have had repeated occasion to observe, Registers were not kept in those times, and a man might know the anniversary of his birthday without knowing the year in which he was born. Leland was educated under Lily at St. Paul's School and at Christ's College, Cambridge. Later he was at Chicheley's College, All Souls, Oxford. To acquire Greek, he repaired to the Academy of Paris. Henry VIII. gave him the office of Librarian, with the title "Antiquarius."

Leland, then, lived in the dawn of our literary culture. He is a good Latin scholar; he wields the language with ease, but indulges himself too much in that timid rhetoric which conceals an absence of force and a dearth of facts, so common with the Benedictines. He was virtually a pupil of theirs; he loved the society of the lean and learned rather than the fat and jolly of the Abbots, as he says. He had imbibed their system; and although he was aware of much trickery and fraud in the monkish literature,

he passionately defended the fables about the English past which he had learned from "Geoffrey of Monmouth" and the rest of the great chorus. He can inform us with the greatest confidence about the flourishing state of Letters in remote and impossible times from the epoch of the "Druids" downwards; but he knows not, or does not choose fully to tell, of the spirit of invention that has been so energetically at work in the monasteries since his boyhood. The Abbots were able without difficulty to deceive a man whose mind was possessed by the craze for false antiquity, and who thought it part of his patriotic duty to protest against the cool scepticism of Polydore Vergil. Yet, notwithstanding all this, John Leland is, with his Italian contemporary, a witness who cannot be gainsaid to the fact that English History was the recent invention of his time.

But let me quote his own account of his literary tour. In a letter addressed to the king, he says—

"There was through the whole of this kingdom no promontory, port or bay, river, stream, flux of waters, pool, lake, incursion of waters, marsh, mountain, valley, plain, thicket, forest, glade, wood, city, town, burgh, castle, township, villa, village, college, cænobium, abbey, monastery, church, manor, farm, or any noteworthy place that he did not visit; and he omitted to note down nothing that was worthy of observation."

He is believed to have been a young man of twenty-five when, in the year 1533, Henry granted him a royal warrant, empowering him to search through the kingdom for writings, records, and archives. He was six years engaged in the labour. It is believed that the subsequent work of digesting his material was too great a tax upon his brain, and that he died of

frenzy in 1552. His MSS. came into the hands of John Cheke, on whose death they passed to Lord Paget and to Lord Burghley, then to the Rev. Humfrey Purefoy and his son, and so to William Burton of Lindley, who presented the greater part to the Bodleian.

The "Commentaries" with which we are here concerned, came into the hands of the reckless John Bale, who garbled them in his "Centuries." Pits, also an unprincipled man, is denied by his pupil, the Benedictine Mayhew, to have ever seen the book, though he loudly praises Leland. It is a remarkable illustration of how young the critical study of English History really is that the Commentaries were only published by Antony Hall of Queen's College, Oxon, in 1709; and that they have not since been used, in any thorough way, by the historians of our country. I propose briefly to point out the value of this book by examining Leland on the actual state of Letters from the beginning of the reign of Henry VIII.; and then by examining the state of English imagination in the educated classes as represented by him. What did he know, and what did he dream concerning the past state of the country?

Let us accompany John Leland on some of his visits to the religious houses of our cities and towns. London appears to have furnished him with very little literature. However, he tells us that he saw in the Dominican or Black Friar's Library a treatise of "Alured the Englishman" on "the Motion of the Heart." Another copy was in the Petrine Library at Cambridge. This author, said to be nearly a contemporary of "Roger Bacon," and who wrote also "On the Education of Hawks," is said to have

commented the "Vegetables of Aristotle," and to have translated many things into Latin.

In Paul's Library Leland refreshed himself with the perusal of "Colman the Wise," a very little-known author to the public of Henry VIII.'s time. He wrote, it appears, a "Description of England" in his native "Saxon" tongue. Poor Leland found it very hard reading, and thought our tongue must have much degenerated since that time! John Harding (who, it is assumed, wrote in Henry IV. or V.'s time) often cites Colman's Chronicle and his Catalogue. But these were merely Tudor productions; and Colman was set back to the time of King John.

Of the Carmelites, or White Friars' Library, Leland says it is the largest in London. He tells the tale of their famous doctor, "Thomas Wallden," who, dying in 1430, left the friars a library worth at least 2000 golden pieces. Yet this library has been strangely reduced in the course of a century; and Leland can but copy down a short list of worthless treatises ascribed to this great doctor, whose name is interwoven with the legend of Oldcastle and the Hussites.

One would have been glad if Leland had given us an exact account of the number and nature of the MSS. he found at St. Albans, where (he says) a learned monk named "Royal Court" showed him "the parchment treasures" of the monastery. He names the poem of "Ralph Alban" in heroic verse, and wonders that "Matthew Paris" makes no mention of him. Perhaps Ralph was dead in Matthew's time! "Nicolas Radcliff" was another very celebrated monk of St. Albans and foe of Wiclif. But the monks at St. Albans did not even know his name. It was at Wells that Leland heard of him.

At Wells, Leland found in the library the work of "William the Little," *alias* of Newburgh, on English History, and he is angry with him for attacking the credit of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and with Polydore for following him, ignorant as they were of the remote antiquity of Britain! The name of William calls for an outburst of admiration at the great learning of the monks in the time of Richard I., of lament at their present luxury and sacred sloth. So fixed in his mind was the accredited literary superstition about antiquity.

Leland went to Malmesbury, his head full of the fame of the great "William the Librarian" of that cloister and English historian. On asking for the place of his burial, he found that but one or two monks had even heard his name. Leland's knowledge was derived from the titles of books—in other words, from the Benedictine system of fiction.

When Leland was at Battle Abbey he looked upon the fine tomb in Lydian marble which was called the "tomb of Odo," and the monks told him that in olden time it had been sacred to the vulgar, for Odo was a saint. Leland seems to have his doubts, but he tells us the name is in English merely Wode, or Wood. He could believe in the treatises ascribed to Odo merely because he found them in the Catalogues.

He refers to a library at Evesham and its "treasures," but all that he sets down are an "Exhortation to the Sacred Virgins," "On the Miracle of the Eucharist," and "Epistles," all by "Adam of Evesham," the abbot.

Leland talks of libraries at Oxford and Cambridge, but adduces hardly anything of historical interest. His account of his visit to the house of the Franciscans

at Oxford is most amusing, and offers one of the most remarkable proofs, not only of the dearth of all useful books, but of the apathy or hostility towards knowledge that prevailed down to the dissolution of the religious houses.

He is writing about the legendary "Robert Great-head" and his friendship for "Adam Marsh" the Franciscan, to whom, as head of the Oxford house, he left all his books, of which there was a great number. "I was lately at Oxford, and had a great desire to see these books. I sought permission to view the Franciscan library. The few asses there were amazed, and brayed out that no mortal was allowed to visit those sacred recesses and view the mysteries, except their Guardian, as they called their head, and the sacred Bachelors of their College. I insisted, being armed with the king's commission, and all but forced them to open that sacred repository. One of the greater asses, still braying to himself, at last opened the door. Great Heaven! what did I find? Dust, cobwebs, moths, worms, filth! The books! I would not buy them for three halfpence! I asked for treasures, and they showed me coals. These are the sacred mysteries, so religiously observed by the Oxford Franciscans." And yet, so duped is Leland by the tales he has heard, he can believe that Bishop Robert's volumes and copies have been thieved away by the wandering Franciscans. "Go now, bishops," he bitterly concludes, "and hand over by will your literary treasures to friars like these."

No doubt Leland came upon many illuminated Service Books of value in the course of his travels. He refers, for example, in his usual fulsome style, to one "William Gray" of Balliol, a man of fortune who travelled in

Italy, and became Bishop of Ely. He acquired a large number of finely written books, and bequeathed them to the library. We hear of similar collections by Gundorp and Free, but without particulars; nor is there the slightest evidence, from end to end of Leland's work, of books being valued more for their intrinsic worth than for their money value! There is not the slightest mention of any collection of Chronicles or Histories which were being turned over with eager curiosity by either churchmen or laymen. In fact, there is strong evidence of a listening class, but not of a reading class in any studious modern sense of the word.

Whenever your eye falls upon Leland diverting himself in a library with eager curiosity, and you ask what he is reading, you meet with a disappointment. It is no treasure in the higher intellectual sense. You see him in Magdalen Library, Oxford, "devouring" a little poem, half obliterated, called "Dares Phrygius on the Trojan War." This was in his student days. Two years later, when studying in Paris, he visited the library of St. Victor, immortalized by the derision of the ex-Benedictine, Rabelais. He found another imperfect copy of the book, and a third, this time anonymous, in a private house. He borrowed the book, being curious about the authorship, and found a hemistich where the poet speaks in the first person. Somebody had written on the margin in Latin, "*Supply, I Joseph.*" Was this, then, that splendid star of Britain, that incomparable poet, Joseph Iscan (of Exeter)? While on his literary tour in later days, Leland found in Thorney Library a perfect copy of the inestimable Joseph. He found that Thomas Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, had been the patron of Joseph who had

paraphrased Dares from the Greek. Some taste of the verses is given for the delectation of the "greedy reader;" they may pass for Renaissance hexameters by a poet inspired with the Trojan craze, and also, as it seems, with hate to the "Saracens" and the "Sultan of Babylon," and love to King Richard, as witnessed in the poem called the "Antiochene War." It is incidental evidence of the fact that the romances of the Crusades were but beginning; that Leland's hunt after a copy of this work was not rewarded, save by the discovery of a fragment at Abingdon. This is incidental evidence of value.

More remarkable is the following, as illustrating the achronological habit which still prevailed. I mean that, although a list of kings had been made out, it was as yet little regarded. Some one, says Leland, had revised the "Trojan War" "after the death of Baldwin." For King Henry III., "who was second king of the English from Richard," is compared with Hector. Leland adds, that since he wrote the above, a German printed edition of Joseph has appeared, but so corrupt, that Joseph would not recognize his offspring were he alive. Moreover, the book has been falsely put out under the name of "Cornelius Nepos, the Roman." So fast and loose did the literary interest play with names and dates.

Another amusing article is that on Nennius. What has become of Nennius, so illustrious in the days of yore, as Leland has heard the monks tell. Quite obscured! Yet if not a window, perhaps a chink may be opened to the light from our tourist's experiences. Riding through Yorkshire, he came to Wharfedale Abbey. The Abbot read the Royal Warrant, and received his visitor with the greatest kindness, and led

him straight to his library, well stocked with books. The Abbot went about his public duties, and the eager scholar pounced upon an "old copy" inscribed in Latin, "Nennius on the Origin of Britain." Here was a treasure indeed! But after he had read a little way Leland's heart sank within him; but he would not lay it down till he had finished. "Was there ever such a fool of a book?—no profit in it at all, except the discovery that some sciole of a monk had done the like in honour of Nennius that some one had done for Gildas. An affair of splendid lies, old wives' fables, and prodigious barbarism! Yet so halting is poor Leland's reasoning, he thinks that the true Nennius ought to be found somewhere. Perhaps a great many ancient authors have been destroyed by these forgers and deflowerers! At last, with much labour, he discovered *two* old copies of Nennius; but, alas! it was no incorrupt "History." There was much about the Britons and Arthur and the Saxon tyranny. This writer must have been a Briton; he uses British words; he studied in Ireland. "Henry of Huntingdon" knew Nennius' "History," but not by his name. Such is Leland's credulity towards written statements about works that are not too impossible in their nonsense; so little suspicion he has that he has been the dupe, not of occasional, but of systematic falsehood.

Supposing Leland to have been arranging these notes on British writers about 1540, it is remarkable that he has hardly a word to say of his literary contemporaries, with the exception of Polydore and one or two other foreigners. He ends with Henry VII.; and perhaps the most important name among those who flourished in that reign is that of John Ross or Rowse, of Warwick, who settled on Guy's Hill, near St.

Mary Magdalen, under the protection of the Earl, and busied himself in the study of antiquity and in writing. Leland had seen and read his works on the Antiquity of Warwick and of Guy's Hill, also one against the false History of the Antiquity of Cambridge. He had also written an unfinished work on the Antiquity of British Academies. He died in 1491, having set up a library in the Porch of St. Mary's, Warwick. If the reader will consult the work on English History in Hearne's collection ascribed to this author, he will see that, supposing it to have been written in Henry VII.'s reign or a little before, the theory of English History could only recently have been laid down.

It is impossible to give an exact account of the number of books in England at the time of Leland's tour. By far the greater part were Biblical and mystical writings in illustration of the system of the Black Monks and the other Orders. Arranged in Catalogues of their imaginary Illustrious men, they make a deceptive show, when it is remembered that many of them are merely advertised, and that they consist of endless repetitions of the same things. The well-written Benedictine treatises on English History are the same with those used by Polydore; the main difference being that Leland brings to light trash which Polydore passes over in contemptuous silence.

But what was the state of belief of this man's mind, so honest and naturally truth-loving as he shows himself to be? It is the state produced by listening to and reading uncontradicted tales at St. Paul's and Cambridge and during his literary tour. When he was a child the monks had noised abroad that they had in their mysterious recesses documents of a vast Antiquity, that they could show how true culture had begun in the

days of Christ under King Lucius, and had gone on, with all its strange interruptions, through some 1500 years. His earlier articles are full of the curious legends which made up the orthodox teaching of the time, and of observations which show the utter imbecility of judgment on the part of the most learned Englishman of his time. He supposes, for example, that the British tongue before the arrival of Cæsar was partly Hebrew and Greek and partly barbarian, even as French; then by use it became "sesquiatin." He explains English words as if he were a foreigner. Lost in his bookish day-dreams, he never compares what he reads with the actual condition of human nature, never thinks of exploding the mock mysteries of the monasteries, or of asking himself how old his "old copies" are, and by what miraculous means these wonderful traditions had been handed down, in spite of fires and Danes and other enemies of books, to the lazy monks of his own time. He believes the substance of the long string of tales to be quite true, because he has been cradled in them and they were part of the Christian religion. He is annoyed even by the disbelief of Polydore in the monk of Monmouth; and would have been horrified had he chanced upon a literary abbot who could assure him that the whole system was about half a century old.

We cannot point to a single Hebrew scholar, whether monk or secular, in England during the reign of Henry VIII. Yet Leland can believe the fine tale that Hebrew culture has flourished in England, and has died away, like a plant on uncongenial soil. A monk at Ramsey Abbey told him that one "Laurence Holbeck" had compiled a Hebrew Dictionary in the time of Henry IV., but "that polypus Robert Wakefield" had carried it off a few years ago. Not content with this, Hebrew

lore must be deduced from the time of "William the Conqueror" and the learned Gregory, a monk of the cloister. It is a dogma that the Jews came hither with the Normans from Rouen; consequently they must have brought Rabbinical learning with them. But Edward Longshanks sent them into exile; their synagogues were profaned, their books sold by auction at Ramsey and Stamford. Gregory hurried thither with the needful cash, and exchanged his copper for the gold of literature. The Jews knew nothing of all this; they were themselves attempting slight Chronicles only during the Revival of Letters. In short, the state of mind of Leland is that of one who seems to see afar in his daydream of learning the light shining on inaccessible peaks, while an impenetrable mist and darkness gathers over the whole foreground of his retrospect.

I am tempted to give one more illustration of this state of mind, because it is peculiarly instructive to every student of human thought and life. Leland, in the course of his tour, paid a visit to what was called the "Oratory of Bede." He stands and wonders. "How has this sacred place been preserved from the ferocity of William the Conqueror down to the present day?" He does not resolve his doubts. He reads the account of the death of Bede by Cuthbert, and is affected by the exhibition of so much sanctity. His doubts, perhaps, disappear. He is no humorist; he is vexed because all is not so clear as it might be. Those monstrous Danes! how could the works of Bede have escaped their hands? But whatever doubt there may be about these matters, it is clear that "Hector Boece," the Scot, is an old woman and a fool in his talk about Bede. He provokes laughter and wrath. Why, he pretends that Bede studied in Italy; that in his old

age he stayed at Melrose, that he died at Durham. As if Bede did not say himself something very different from this, and Cuthbert that he was buried at Jarrow. See what Simeon of Durham and Roger Hoveden say about Bede: he never was in Italy! Leland was not aware that the canon who writes as "Hector Boece" was but little older than himself, and that his allusions to Bede show how the literary legend was yet in its plastic state.

Leland was not a man of genius like his contemporary, the jesting monk who wrote under the mask of "Rabelais," and poured contempt upon the whole system of historic fiction that was coming into vogue. In the Catalogue of Absurdities in the library of St. Victor, Paris, Rabelais sets down "Beda, *de Optimitate Triparum!*" Nor had Leland taste enough to understand that no man ever passed in England under such a name as Beda, which is merely allegorical of the idea of prayer; or that his praying-place was a part of the same holy convention. So far on the nature of Leland's testimony to the state of Letters in England. He was not aware, in his grief at what he thought to be the decadence of culture, that he was living in the great intellectual seed-time of England.

THE RISE OF THE CHAUCER LEGEND AND POETRY.

The story of the rise of English culture might be written almost exclusively from the rich material supplied by the "Canterbury Tales." For this poet, or this guild of poets, is full of a knowledge of the actual world to be found nowhere else. I may remind the reader—but it is unnecessary—of the praises of Roger Ascham. But let me briefly show that the work should

be studied as a mirror of the manners, the ideas, the reminiscences and the beliefs about the past, during the early Tudor period. It is John Leland who, writing perhaps about 1540, first informs us of the growth of the legend about Geoffrey Chaucer. He knows, as usual, nothing definite of any personality. He merely argues the matter on the basis of rumour, which proceeded from some writers in the interests of the Nobility, who wished to refer the beginnings of Natural Poetry to the imagined brilliant time of Richard of Bordeaux and the two Henries who followed.

The effort was made to represent Chaucer as a universal genius, dialectician, rhetor, poet, philosopher and mathematician, an ornament of Oxford. There is some ground for believing that the White Friars had part in this construction, because a book on the "Sphere" is set down to Chaucer, wherein he is made to own his debt to two Carmelites. He must also be represented as "a holy Theologian" to complete the tale of his perfection. He must be made to sojourn in France, so as to adorn himself with all the graces of French culture. And finally, he must, like all our English illustrious, be at home in the Inns of Court and the colleges of the lawyers. He must be the friend of Gower, and his one object must be the adornment of the English tongue "in all numbers." He must lay the Italian and French poets under contribution, Petrarch and Alan, and must rival them. He must translate from French and Latin into English; and then he must proceed to write verses "out of his own head." He must bring our language to that pitch of purity, eloquence, and grace, that it may take its place among the polished tongues of the world. So England shall place her National Poet in the same rank with

Dante and with Petrarch; nay, with Maconides of Greece, and with Virgil of Rome.

Leland quotes his own Epigrams, and also some verses written a few years before at the request of the printer Bertholet. But Chaucer is not yet known to the Humanist Latin poets, Leland laments. He will therefore give a list of Chaucer's pieces. He says that William Caxton—who, it is agreed, was our first printer—collected all the works he could acquire in one volume. Better was the edition of Bertholet and Thynne, who, after research for old copies, made many additions. Brian Tuck, a friend of Leland's, added a preface to the last impression. Leland's testimony, therefore—omitting the uncertain Caxton edition—reaches only to "a few years before" the time of his writing, and cites the edition then printed for the list of Chaucer's works, which he gives in Latin. There are the twenty-four Cantian Tales, two in prose. "Peter Ploughman" is Chaucer's by common consent of scholars, but in both editions it is suppressed, because of its attacks on the morals of priests. He then gives a list of twenty other pieces, mostly of Humane poetry, the first of which is the "Romaunt of the Rose," adding that these books "are read everywhere at the present day." Further, Leland finds that in the prologue to the "Loves of the Heroides," the poet confesses that he had written a little book on the death of the Duchess Blanche of Lancaster, and that he translated an opuscle of Origen on Magdalen, "if, indeed, Origen wrote anything of the kind."

In this vague way does Leland speak of the rise of English poetry and of the supposed great founder of the art of writing with "torrent eloquence" in our native tongue. So little pure-hearted love is there for

art as art, it must needs be added, that it was an addition to Chaucer's glory that he had a sister wedded to William Pole (unless the name escapes me), Duke of Suffolk. She lived in great splendour at Ewelme, and there died and was buried, as Leland has heard. Chaucer himself died in London, and was buried at Westminster, leaving his son Lewis heir of his property and his seat at Woodstock, hard by the royal villa. "Some time after" William Caxton affixed a distich on his monument, taken from a certain dirge written by Stephen Sarigono of Milan.

Nothing whatever was discovered about Chaucer after John Leland's time, but much was invented under the pressure of curiosity, and the great desire, as the works grew in favour, to know *who* he really was. There is great want of humour in these researches and fables. The simple fact is that a coterie of wits, scholars, under the powerful protection of certain noble houses, chose, as in many analogous cases, to set up an ideal personality whom no one could discover; to plant him in "good old times" in the society of kings and nobles, and, secure under the mask of his name, to describe the manners of the early Tudor time, and launch the shafts of satire at the religious orders. The allusions to Ewelme and Woodstock would doubtless be understood by the initiated; but the secret was well kept; and John Leland knew no more of the source of this literary activity than he knew of the origin of the legend of Wiclif. Merton College may very probably have been in the secret.

The remarks of Sidney in the "Defence of Poesy" may be recalled, that it was strange the poet should see so clearly in a misty time, and that in brighter ages men should go stumblingly after him. The difficulty

is solved when we once understand that the admirable men of the Chausir or Chaucer guild were, in fact, men of the Renaissance, working under the stimulus of the great time when, as Polydore says, Letters flowed over the Alps to these Northern climes. They lead us out of the gloomy cell into the light of day ; they reveal the England and Europe of the fifteenth century by their retrospective pictures, and the actual England of the early Tudor period by their faithful studies of manners and costumes from the very life. Their knowledge of their ignorance is the measure of the knowledge and ignorance of the best-educated men during the reign of Henry VIII.

CHAPTER VIII.

EARLY PRINTED BOOKS—LEGENDS OF THE PRESS.

A BRIEF examination of the legends of the early Printing Presses and of the books issued therefrom will show, in the first place, how small in amount was the literature produced down to the end of the reign of Henry VII. In the second place, it will show that the notion of making out a Chronicle of the past is but in its inception. In the third place, the quality of the Chronicle itself reflects a state of willing credulity among the English audience, and of utter ignorance, to which no fable, however monstrous, was unacceptable. Again, it will be seen that what was called English Story was contrived upon etymological fancies and deductive principles, that its substance was partly borrowed from, and partly invented in analogy to, old historical legends of Greece.

I may also call attention to the uncertainty in the dating of the early books ; because I believe that by an induction of such instances from the English Presses and from those on the Continent, the probability or almost the certainty will be made out, that the custom of dating from the era of the Incarnation was only beginning at some time subsequent to Typography.

We have been taught to repeat the name of William Caxton as that of the man who first introduced the mystery of printing into England. This

The Caxton
Press.

is part of our national literary dogma or convention. But the facts are quite negative in their teaching as to the personality of Caxton; as the patient researches of the late Mr. William Blades have shown.

We must dismiss from our minds the patriotic imaginations of late writers like Thomas Fuller, and attend strictly to the manner in which the legend of Caxton grew up, in analogy to the legends of the Illustrious men of the Church.

The reader needs, perhaps, no reminder that our early British story was brought into currency by scholars who were acquainted with the legend of Troy. When the prologue to the "Recuyell of the Historie of Troy" was put before the public, it contained a statement referring Caxton's origin to the Weald of Kent. From the prologue to the "Life of Charles the Great" it is intimated that the printer had learned to read and write a fair hand. So the figure of Master William Caxton of the Weald of Kent, Mercer, arose before English imagination, and doubtless it was agreeable to connect the patriotic tradition of Kent with the art of Typography.

But the reader must be warned, on the strength of a long induction of cases, against supposing that the statements in our early printed books are of any biographical value. The habit of fiction prevails everywhere, and in the case of this noble art on its introduction, secrecy and disguise were means of mere self-protection and defence. The "Recuyell" referred to is believed to have been the first book printed in English, and the purport of the title-page is to convey to the reader the impression that a priest and chaplain of the House of Burgundy had translated the collection from Latin into French, and that William Caxton, the Mercer

of London, had rendered them from French into English at the command of the Lady Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy, the Yorkist princess who played so important a part in English politics after the death of her brother Edward IV. Further, the reader was invited to believe that the work was begun in Bruges in the year of the Incarnation of our Lord God, 1468, and finished in the holy city of Colen in 1471. Not the slightest confidence can be placed in the literal accuracy of the dates, but it may be quite safe to infer that the House of Burgundy and the Mercers' Company of London had great part in the patronage of the printers' enterprise.

The prime authority for any statements about Caxton is the early printed books; and the statements or allusions then made are of that vague and unsupported kind on which nothing definite can be built. On closer attention, it appears that the stealth and deliberate craft with which a system of literature had been begun in the Benedictine cloisters, attended on all the movements of the printing press. How idle an anachronism to refer the modern habits of the Press to that turbulent time! It is indeed a proof of the secrecy and jealousy of the early printers that the old habits so mechanically continue in certain matters that may seem unimportant to laymen: as Mr. Blades, a learned member of the craft, has told us.

It is believed that the book on "Chess" was the earliest printed in England. The actual year of the publication is uncertain; though one edition bears date 1474 and no place, a second edition bears no date at all. But here the printers, behind the mask of Caxton, entertain us with a story of a French Doctor of Divinity of the Order of St. John's, Jerusalem, who wrote a book called "Chess moralized." It had

The Game
of Chess.

been translated at Bruges into English. The figures are rudely cut, and the Game, itself of Oriental origin, is seen to be in its infancy in the West. It has, however, assumed an ecclesiastical stamp. Curious, and not merely curious, but important to observe, that the Rooks are said to be Vicars and Legates of the King; and that they are represented with caps or hoods on their heads, similar to that in the well-known figure of Caxton. It has been assumed, and with good reason, that the print of Caxton has been invented from these figures, until seeing has become believing, and we think we know William Caxton in his hood.

The effort is to make the unfortunate Duke of Clarence patron of the book and protector of the printers, and so to confirm the notion that it had been produced in England: of which there is really no evidence. If we pursue the history of the book a little higher, we come upon one of the catalogues of the friars, which are all constructed upon the principle of making out an imaginary antiquity for their illustrious writers. Thus Antonius Senensis, the Chronicler of the Order of Preachers, or Dominicans, gives the author as Jacobus de Cezolio of the year 1295. Then it is said by Lambecius that the name was Casalis, from the town of Casali, and that this was corrupted to Thessalis or Thessalonica in the work of Oudain. Then Du Fresne adds another to these wild conjectures by supposing two different men of the same Order, the later of whom lived about 1410. There is another tale in Pits of one Simon Ailward, c. 1456, who wrote Latin rhymes on the Game. All that is really established—and this is of historic importance—is that the Game, as a part of Arabian learning, came into use in the West

Conjectures
as to author-
ship.

Chess of
Arabian
origin.

through the means of the learned monks and friars. The printers to this day call their room a *chapel*; but it will never be discovered in what church they were first sheltered.

On further attention to the evidence it becomes apparent that the printers were working under the patronage and protection of the influential persons who invented our English mythology. In the "History of Jason," an undated book, the statement is made that the work was written in French by the chaplain of the Duke of Burgundy, whose son, Philip the Good, founded the Order of the Golden Fleece. The book is translated in honour of King Edward IV., as a Knight of that Order. A tale is also told of paintings in the chateau of Hessdin in Artois, which represented the fine old Greek legend, and of contrivances which illustrated the craft of Meden. We are in the Revival of Letters and Art, when Instinct at first directed men to the old Greek lore as a source for a poetic construction of the history of the West. But ecclesiastical interest substituted Gideon's Fleece for Jason's, as the preface of the Caxton Guild already intimates.

This guild—for such they were—put forth "The Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers" at some time not ascertained. The book, however, bears the date 1477, and it is pretended that Earl Rivers, a member of the Woodville family, so ill-fated in our national story, had translated the book from the French. A great effort has been made to glorify this Antony Woodville as a chevalier and man of letters; and in the romances about him we discern those habits and tastes which contributed to form our national epics. He is supposed to have become acquainted with the

The "His-
tory of
Jason."

The
"Dictes."

book while on a pilgrimage to St. James of Compostella, and to have acquired a very just relish for the "sweet saying of the Paynems" from Homer down to Galen. There is a sly chapter at the end, containing sarcasms on women, imputed to Socrates, with a protest against the notion that they could be possibly applied to the ladies of England.

Another book put out under the name of Lord Rivers was the "Cordial," a book of religious meditation from the French. It bears the date 1478. The Epilogue, pretended to be written by Caxton, bears a very strong stamp of Catholic devotion. It will be observed how negative the evidence is, so far, on the question of historical writing or reading in England. We have nothing more as yet than a hint of the influence of the Greek mythology at work in the poetic and inventive brains of our enterprising chroniclers.

We come to the year 1480. Three books bear this date, viz. "The Image of the World," "The Metamorphoses of Ovid," and "The Chronicles," with a "Description of England."

The Prologue to "The Image of the World" is fictitious. But it may be collected from its statements that what passed for Science in the late fifteenth century was translated from Latin into French, and so into English. And again, the Caxton guild show their desire to claim the protection of French and English nobles, of the Goldsmiths' Company, and of the Abbots of Westminster. The memory of Edward IV. and Lord Hastings, his Chamberlain, is preserved in the prologue.

The contents of the book reveal that great hypertrophy and that excitement of phantasy which was

leading some men into great illusions, others on the path of genuine invention. Here are the tales of the great Wizard Virgil, his copper fly which chases all other flies from his presence, and his brazen horse which cures all animals that look upon it. Here, too, we have the legend of the Brasen Head (repeated in connection with Roger Bacon), which answers all questions and foretells all events. The precious relics of Virgil are said to have been seen at Naples when the book was first written, *i.e.* in that magical century, the thirteenth. The general facts suggest the existence of some company of scholars who made capital out of the great name of the old Roman, and used it to give solemnity to their prodigious stories. The popularity of the book, together with the nature of its contents, enable us to form a clear idea of the general state of the public mind—ignorant, credulous, yet full of that curiosity which leads in the end to genuine knowledge. The over-stimulation of the appetite for the miraculous led to a jaded state of the imagination, which began to recover itself in healthful contact with the facts of the world.

But we are more immediately concerned in this place with the book of “Chronicle of “Chronicle of England.” England.” The compilers of the book are necessarily unknown. It may, however, be taken for certain that they belonged to the literary clique who were in the whole secret of the invention of English story; and the interest of the book consists in the fact that it contains the first argument of that long Drama of Kings which our poets and chroniclers elaborated. It is, and naturally so under these conditions, a very meagre production, although it is supposed to cover the immense period of time from the lady Albine

eponymous heroine of the isle Albion, down to the beginning of the reign of Edward IV.

The idea of our mythographers was to deduce the whole story of the British Isles from the legends of the East, that is from the Greek mythology, with which was later mixed that of the Jews and Arabians. Out of the names of places those of heroic personalities are derived, precisely after the analogy of the old mythologies. This Albion gives rise to Albine, who is feigned one of thirty daughters of Diocletian, a great "king of Syria." The rest of the story is framed upon the model of the myth of Danam and Ægyptus, the eponyms of Danaon Argos and Egypt: which was invented by the Greek settlers in the Delta to account for their presence there, and to ascertain their title to the land. Daughters and sons are symbolic expressions for lands and tribes; weddings stand for alliances or conquests and the like. So Albine, daughter of the Syrian king, comes to our island, and by her wedding with a dæmon, becomes the parent of a race of monsters, who peopled the land until the coming of Brute the Trojan. [Other writers of the same faction were busy with similar inventions concerning the origin of the Scotch, Irish, and Welsh. So late as about 1520 a writer had produced a story connecting Athens, Egypt in the time of Moses, Portugal, Ireland and Scotland in one web of legend, the principal figure in which is Scota, daughter of Pharaoh and ancestress of all the Scots.]

But to return to the "Chronicles" of the "Caxton Guild." When they pause after their immense retrospect at the beginning of Edward IV.'s reign, they have not yet touched a single authentic fact in their course;

and the few decades which intervene between that reign and their own time form a blank almost entire in their memory ; so that it had to be filled up with the forms and colours of an awful domestic drama of the two royal houses. The whole is pure invention in the same sense in which an epic is an invention. The motive is to establish a dogma of English History, and to make the stories of kings illustrative of that dogma. If the tradition is that the Caxton "Chronicles" were printed in a Benedictine abbey, the certainty is that the composition of them was mainly the work of the literary monks of that Order.

One of the curious illustrations of their system is that they tell the tale how King John was poisoned at Swineshead Abbey by a monk, Story of King John. which is repeated again and again in other Chronicles. The reason is because King John has to play the part of the tyrant, and the monk that of the patriot in the English drama. It is the same thing over again when the Benedictine "Matthew Paris" and the Scotch canon Major represent the Prior of Clerkenwell in the following reign as threatening to dethrone the son of King John if he should cease to do justice to the prelates. In the dramatic reply of Henry he is made to confirm the tale of his father's murder at the instigation of the Order. The tale receives the support of Langtoft, Higden, John of Tynemouth, Otterbourne the Franciscan, and others of the monastic Orders.

The times were violent when these Chronicles were written down. But the language is probably more violent than the deeds. It might be going too far to assert that the lines of Yorkist and Lancastrian princes were constantly threatened from the cloisters, unless they complied with the politics of the Abbots. And

yet it is clear enough, from the best authority we have on the reign of Henry VII., that he had reason to dread the religious houses as hotbeds of conspiracy and rebellion; and that he desired to suppress their rights of sanctuary. However, the tales about King John, here to be found in their germ, are among the most significant in the whole invention. At a time when the people of England were goaded to madness by the oppressions of the Hierarchy, they who were mainly responsible for the misery sit down to draw the portrait of an impossible tyrant, who tramples on the people without being able to defend himself, and of equally impossible lovers of liberty in the persons of barons and prelates of the Order of St. Benedict.

It is equally clear that the description of these islands affixed to the Caxton "Chronicles" proceeds from the Benedictines. It has been derived from the "Polychronicon," a production to which we have referred in another part of this work. This is the only English Geography we have before the time of Henry VIII. It was not known until late in the preceding age; and it reveals the astounding ignorance of the subject, together with the conceit of orthodox knowledge which prevailed before the discovery of America. The English translation of the "Polychronicon" is dated 1482.

But let us pass from Westminster to St. Albans. The legend runs that Caxton and the St. Albans printer were in correspondence, which resolves itself into the general fact of a close guild, the members of which wrought in concert, under Benedictine superintendence. There is the story that a "Treatise on Rhetoric," compiled in Cambridge by a Franciscan, was printed at St. Albans in 1480. But

where the symptoms of confederacy clearly appear is in the case of the "St. Albans Chronicle," so called, and dated 1483. Our late Tudor chroniclers, Grafton and Foxe, confounded it with Caxton Chronicles, for it is of the same mint. De Worde's edition of 1497 merely ascribes the book to a schoolmaster of St. Albans. All that is proved is a wish to connect the monastery with the production.

The same principle of resting on the reign of Edward IV. as an epoch down to which invention might freely range without fear of contradiction, is here observable. This Chronicle contains the tale of the Woman-Pope, which is solely a Benedictine invention, repeated many times in these Chronicles. The writer says that this Pope, "Joan the Englishman," was a great Scriptural scholar; and that after her election she gave birth to a child, and was the sixth Pope who contrasted the name of Holiness with a vicious life. She was not numbered in the Book of Popes. There are other books bearing the St. Albans mark which have no slight importance in their bearing on the beginnings of our English Culture. The lore of heraldry was beginning in the Tudor period. The "Book of Blasing of Arms" is dated St. Albans, 1486. It contains the elements of heraldry, with the science of hawking and hunting, and other curious matters of interest to the gentlefolk, who were beginning to read a very little.

In the tract on "Coat-armour" the object is to distinguish gentle from ungenteel men, and to trace the origin of Bondage up to Adam, and from him to the Angels. The "Legends of Troy" are also sources of the history of Arms. The laws of Arms are before the Ten Commandments

Coat-armour,
Gentleness,
and Bond-
age.

of God. Christ is a Gentleman by his mother's side, and prince of coat-armour. The Coat of King Arthur is figured. The *fleur de lis* of France are said to have been given from heaven in sign of everlasting trouble, battle, and sword. Other particulars show that the author, a man who mixed in the best society of his time, is working on the theory of French and English History as laid down in Froissart. It is very curious at first sight that this book, which contains many coarsenesses, should be dedicated to an illustrious and holy lady, Abbess of Sopwell, and sister of Lord Berners; and that she should be said to have versified a tract on hunting by Sir Tristram, a monk and an old forester. And yet these incongruities, according to our present taste, correspond to the revelations of English society in the "Canterbury Tales."

Among other works ascribed to the Caxton press at about the same time is the "Siege and Conquest of Jerusalem," giving the story of Godfrey of Boulogne, and the kingdom of the Latins. It was written, not to teach the facts of ancient times, of which nothing was really known, but with the object of stirring up Christendom against the Turks, and to "recover" a land from the Moslems which the Christians had never possessed. It is miraculous romance; disguising the military passions and ideals of the time in a cloke of religion. The reader is invited, as usual, by the printers, to imagine that the book had been presented to Edward IV. It may be tedious to repeat the same thing so often, but the editors of these works were utterly unable to find any true record of the reign of that king, as their statements, in publishing the "Polychronicon," show.

Another illustration of the entire incapacity for either writing or reading History, except as ^{The Festival Book.} poetry and allegory, may be seen in the "Liber Festivalis," or "Directions for keeping Fast all the Year," dated 1483, at Westminster. This became a popular book, and was reprinted by De Worde and others. The sermons and tales give an insight into the nature of oral religious instruction in England. The "odd stories," as Hearne calls them, are not here alluded to for the purpose of ridicule, but merely to show that the state of the English mind precluded historic thought. To enter the church walls was to enter the world of sacred romance, and to disbelieve all that the experience of the senses had taught the worshipper in his worldly hours. Similar observations apply to the "Golden Legend," dated 1483. It is not necessary to cite the legend of St. Ursula and the Eleven Thousand Virgins, the curious origin of which was exposed by Father Soimond, if, indeed, his theory was correct.* Here, again, the taste of the seventeenth century recoiled from the chosen food of the sixteenth-century imagination, on which all our poets had from childhood been nourished.

In connection with the "Confessio Amantis" ascribed to John Gower, it is said to have been printed by Caxton in the "first year of Richard III.," or that of our Lord "1493." ^{The "Confessio Amantis."} Is this a printer's error? Is there an X too many? Is there one too few in an early book of the Oxon Press? Or is it that the printers had not yet arranged the Chronology of English History? Leaving this point, there is the personality of Gower to be discussed, who remains

* That St. Undecimilla, V.M., was converted into eleven thousand virgin martyrs.

utterly unknown ; or resolves himself into a shade in an undiscovered past, an object of reverence to the first cultivators of the English Muse. The effort is made to flatter the great by representing that our bards sprang of noble or gentle blood. The Canons of St. Mary, Southwark, were the sole depositaries of the secret.

The "Book of the Order of Chivalry" shows with what ease they, who knew nothing authentic of the royal Edwards, the very flowers of chivalry, could bound back to the days of Brennus and Belin, long anterior to Christ, and to those of Arthur. And how cheerfully may it be recognized that in the Arthurian legends some education in manliness and gentleness was provided for the youth of England by a class of writers who may be regarded in a sense as rivals of the ascetic monks and friars. This book is undated, but it shows that the scheme of the history of early kings is known. Hardly can it have been dedicated to Richard III., King of England and France, at a time when he was unanimously held to be a murderer, and all but a fiend. The legend of Richard was not circulated till some time after the accession of the Tudors.

The "Life of King Arthur" has been dated 1485. The tales of manly prowess and of illicit love were adapted to the taste of at least a large section of the nobility, and were severely censured by Roger Ascham in his "Schoolmaster." He hints that they were written by "idle monks and wanton canons" in the monasteries ; but he does not note that the immoralities he disapproves were not in the least inconsistent with that kind of devotion which it was the object of the monks and canons to encourage. There

Romances of
chivalry.

King
Arthur.

is no notion of a common moral law binding alike on all ; what would be a principal vice in the character of the monk is a pardonable levity in the conduct of the knight who is vowed to the service of our Lady, and is ready to take up the Cross against the Turks, Saracens, and miscreants in general.

That these books are nearly all said to be translated out of French is one of the proofs that that tongue was the fashion of the upper classes at the time. It is no proof of the backward state of English, of which many were beginning to be not unashamed as their native and mother tongue. It is the Caxton Guild, who were in the whole secret of Chaucer's ^{Chaucer.} works, who lauded the ideal Geoffrey as the worshipful father and first founder and embellisher of ornate English, whose soul was to be prayed for, and who was eternally to be remembered ; who, they said, lay buried in the Abbey before the Chapel of St. Benet. They, it seems, put out an imperfect edition of the "Canterbury Tales." It was they also who introduced Lydgate as a Benedictine of Bury to the public ; who is said to have written the "Life of our Lady," with the remarkable chapters on her midwives ; also the narrative of the raising from the dead of two bodies by St. Augustine, the Apostle of England, and other matters.

How often has remark been made on the poverty, both in point of quantity and quality, of the works that issued from the Caxton Press ! Why, it has been asked, were the Classics not printed ? The answer is, they were only beginning to be needed during the reign of Henry VIII. Why was the New Testament not printed ? The answer is, there was no talk of its being given to the people in the vernacular, or of its having been so given in the ancient days of Wiclif, until the

same reign. It is also clear that the Press was from the first under ecclesiastical censorship in England; and that on this account the Testament had to be printed and imported from abroad, with consequences of very doubtful good.

The productions of the Press, thus briefly noticed, sufficiently reveal what was the nature of the intellectual pleasures thought proper for the small reading class in England at the end of the fifteenth century. They were pleasures in the gift of the Churchmen, and in return for the boon they reaped in many ways an abundant reward. They made themselves masters of the young English imagination, which in its pride of country was seeking to realize a brilliant past. Taking the dates given us as merely approximate to the truth, it was when the Wars of the Roses were drawing to an end that young Englishmen of good family began to busy themselves with the reading of Chronicles at the Inns of Court. That patriotic passion and fancy which was destined to flower so splendidly a century later was here nourished. It was cultivated at reckless expense of the faculty of judgment. The Italians of the Roman Court had the more correct taste; and it was necessary for one of them to relate the English legends in a manner agreeable to the more cultivated readers of the time of Henry VIII.

There are some further particulars in the legends of the Press which may throw light upon the general state of England at the end of the Wars of the Roses. The tracts of Cicero on "Old Age and Friendship" bear the date 1481. The latter is said to have been translated by the famous Earl of Worcester, John Tiptoft, whose memory is extravagantly praised, and who is said to have late piteously lost his life.

Ciceronian
tracts.

But if the book was printed in 1481 we have to wait more than thirty years before John Leland notices this legend of Tiptoft, on which Polydore Vergil is silent.

From Leland's article we gather that there was a party of the clergy strongly interested in the praises of Tiptoft; and if they can be identified at all, they must have been the Black Friars, or Dominicans, who once had a church near Fleet Gate, London. In Henry VIII.'s time there was—if we can trust Leland—a chapel with a marble tomb in this church. And the reading of the Latin inscription is: "*Jane, Lady Ingulsthorpe, sister of Earl John, made this Chapel; and here with him she rests.*"

Leland in this article copies down what purport to be the statements of "William Caxton, First Printer of England," concerning the learning and virtues of Tiptoft, his high esteem with the Pope and with Italian scholars, his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and other matters.

It would be long to unravel the strange story of this learned and pious earl, who is said to have been the chief victim of the Wars of the Roses. When Edward IV. had cast out Henry VI., it seems that Tiptoft escaped to Jerusalem. When Henry VI. came back for a short time, Tiptoft came back from his wanderings also. He presided at the trial of certain nobles at Southampton, who were accused of high treason. Among them was Clapham. They were cruelly proceeded against, their bodies being impaled after death, as an example to malefactors. The common folk said they had never seen the like. Yet Tiptoft was in general a merciful man. Why did he act thus? John Leland knows not; but he knows that he was punished for the deed. He was suspected of favouring

Edward IV., and was executed on Tower Hill. His corpse was buried in the Dominican Church.

It may seem a strange thing to call in Shakespeare as a witness to anything connected with the art of printing. And yet where all is imagination in respect of the details, the great master of imagination is one of the best of witnesses. He makes the rebel Jack Cade charge his victim, Lord Say, with the crime of having erected a Grammar School, and having caused printing to be used instead of the score and the tally, which were all the "books" our forefathers had. He had also built a paper-mill contrary to the Crown and dignity of the King. The speech is no doubt intended to represent the blind and besotted state of the popular mind, not to teach exact chronological fact. This was beyond the reach of any student of the Elizabethan time. It may be inferred that one of the sins of the aristocracy, in the eyes of the Socialists of the time, was the erection of the barrier of book learning between themselves and the multitude. Or such was the opinion of the poet.

Lord Herbert, who writes down his imaginations about the Tudor time as if they were History, supposes that the Press was established to the great dismay of the Roman Hierarchy, especially of Cardinal Wolsey. Foxe, the martyrologist, looks back upon typography as the great providential means for the discovery of the errors and frauds of the old Church. In that opinion he receives great support from a sect to whom he was bitterly opposed, viz. the Jesuits. But neither in our brilliant period of Letters under the last of the Tudors and the first of the Stuarts could men account for the origin of this remarkable instrument of culture. The

Reminiscences of printing in Shakespeare.

In Lord Herbert.

In Foxe.

In Stow.

Chronicler Stow, who either has no information about the English past save what he found set down in the books of the monks and friars, or dares not impart any independent opinions to the public, says that the science was found at Magunce in Germany about 1459, by Cuthemberg, and was brought into England about 1471, by William Caxton, Mercer. With him the chroniclers Baker and Howell, who write as mere hacks and to please a foolish public, agree. But the facts were not known, nor were they later discovered. Fuller, a man of genius and independence, writing about 1655, sets down the introduction of printing against the year 1500, as the approximate date.

Then, in 1664, appeared the work of Atkins on the Origin of Printing, which contained a fresh romance worth noticing, because the writer has touched on general facts which had been previously ignored, and on which he bases his theory. Atkins says he found a book printed at Oxon in 1468. It was the Benedictine work, "St. Jerome on the Apostles' Creed." He says that from the same hand he received the copy of a Lambeth MS. in which the circumstantial story was found, which agreed with Atkins' idea of the origin of the art. Omitting many details, the story ran that Archbishop Bouchier conspired with Henry VI. to bring a printing-mould into England; that they knew it could not be done without great secrecy and great expense. They must bribe some of the Haarlem printers, superintended by Cuthemberg. So they send over Turnour, a royal servant under the protection of the able trader Caxton, who had much business in Holland. Turnour must disguise himself, Caxton needed no disguise. They went to Amsterdam and Leyden, but dared not enter Haarlem. They laid

out 1000 marks in judicious bribery, and sent to the king for more money. At last they brought off a workman named Corsellis in disguise. He is carried under guard to Oxon, and is not allowed to escape till he has taught his art. Thus the romance would prove that the press at Oxon was the earliest in Europe except those of Haarlem and Mentz. He would further prove that there were no printers except the King's sworn servants.

But at Oxon Leonard Aretino's translation of the Ethics of Aristotle bears date 1479, and the same year sees the production of the treatise on Original Sin by the Austin Friar Egidio Romano. At the end of the former work are verses, professedly honouring Thomas Hunte as the first to print Latin books at Oxon, as N. Jenson had done at Venice. His partner, Theodoric Rood, is supposed to print these verses, and is said to be a native of Cologne. Yet the inquisitive have been able to discover no more than four books printed by these new candidates for fame, Hunt and Rood. Neither at Oxon nor at Cambridge was there much printing until the reign of Henry VIII.

Where a number of particular statements are made, not one of which can upon examination be trusted, we are forced upon some probable construction of the facts. The Caxton Guild were naturally anxious to claim as high antiquity as possible for their art; yet they have not ventured above the reign of Edward IV. If this date be lowered by some twenty or thirty years, we arrive at the last decade of the century; that is to say, at the period during which Polydore, our best witness, conceives that culture spread from Italy over the West.

CHAPTER IX.

FRENCH AND ENGLISH CHRONICLES.

THE Chronicle imputed to Jean Froissart, who is described as a Canon of Chymay in Hainault, was printed in Paris late in the fifteenth century or at the beginning of the sixteenth. The English translation was imputed to Lord Berners, and appeared in London in 1523. It is to Berners that we are also supposed to be indebted for a "History of Arthur." Both compositions may be said to have been conceived in the interests of the nobility and of chivalry; always, of course, with due regard to the interests of the Church.

In connection with this writer there are the like evidences of that method and system which are apparent in the writings of the Benedictines. Each chronicler must link himself to a predecessor, and must, in turn, be followed by a continuator. In this case Froissart is supposed to depend on Jean le Bel, Canon of St. Lambert, Liege (the friend of Jean of Hainault), and his "very veracious chronicles." Then, again, as is so often the case, there are said to be two Jeans le Bel—one of the late fourteenth, the other of the late fifteenth century. And then this literary fable of Hainault is connected with the historical fable into which are introduced the Lady Philippa of Hainault,

Queen of England. It is pretended that both she and King Richard III. received copies of these works from the hands of their authors. And then it is said that Froissart wrote at the request of Robert of Namur. All that can be inferred is that the canons of Liege and the monks of Gemblours were in the secret of this system. St. Maternus of Liege, it may be remarked in passing, was "son of the Widow of Nain," or "disciple of St. Peter." We fall again upon the tracks of "Apostolic Men."

The Froissart Chronicle is purely romantic, and throws a clear light on the habit of mind, or the *manière de voir* of clerics who wrote in the royal and chivalrous interest. The style is very pleasing, but the imagination of reciter and listener is supposed to be steeped in the spirit of ecclesiastical wonder. Many things are to be seen in this company which never were beheld by the waking eyes of sane humanity. The vision of the English past is not from the light of Records, but from inspiration and the poet's dream. If the Chronicle be turned into blank verse, the nature of it will be at once felt and appreciated.

For example. At the battle of Rosebèque (given in the year 1342), the Oriflamme of France was displayed, that precious Banner, first sent from Heaven for a Mystery, and ever a great comfort to them that saw it. On that day the Oriflamme showed its virtue by dispersing a dense mist from the sky. Then came a Dove, which flew over the King's camp, and alighted on one of the King's banners. This was held to be a good omen. Again: In the town of Burburke during the wars of French and English, a villain leapt on the altar

of St. John's, and tried to take a stone out of the crown on the head of the image of our Lady. The image turned its head away, and the thief fell dead. This, asserts the Chronicle, was "*a true thing; many men saw the miracle.*" A second attempt was made on the sacred object; and all the bells, the ropes of which had been tied up, rang an alarm. The king and all the lords made gifts to the image, and the church was much visited because of the miracle.

The plan of such Chronicles was, so to say, laid down in these local and profitable legends of miraculous shrines. The attentive reader can never forget that he is viewing the world through the mystical medium of a church interior.

Without miracles the Chronicle would be divested of its charm, and would collapse into the dry record of vague reminiscences. Holy St. Miracles at Avignon.

Peter of Luxembourg, Cardinal, and son to Earl Guy of St. Paul, who died in the battle of Juliers, was called to God in his early manhood in the full bloom of his sanctity. He was buried in the chapel of St. Michael at Avignon, and wrought great miracles after his decease. The Pope and the Cardinals, seeing the miracles daily increase and multiply, wrote to the King of France, also to the brother of the Cardinal, desiring him to come to Avignon. The Earl Valeran of St. Paul came, gave goodly lamps of silver to hang before the altar, and marvelled at the belief of the people.

One would no more think of cross-examining Froissart as to his geographical statements than one would interrupt the talk of a pretty woman. He tells the tale how the Christian lords and the Genoese went to lay siege to the city of Africa in Barbary. A messenger was sent to the

Christians
and
Moslems.

Saracens to inform them that the quarrel which entitled the lords to make war on them was that their race had crucified Jesus Christ, and that they did not believe in the Virgin Mary, nor in Baptism. The Saracens laughed, and said it was the Jews who put Christ to death. It appeared, however, that God was against them; for when the Saracens were on the point of surprising the Christians, the apparition of a multitude of ladies and damsels, clad all in white, daunted them. One lady excelled all the rest in beauty. A mysterious dog, called by the Genoese "Our Lady's Dog," and unowned by any of their company, also aided the Christians by his baying. So did the Virgin and her company defend the Christian men.

The chronicler pretends that Windsor Castle was begun by King Arthur when the Table Round began. King Edward rebuilt Windsor, founded the Order of the Blue Garter and the anniversary feast of St. George. So the Chapel of the Canons came into existence about 1344. Froissart, or the writer under that mask, declares that he himself was at Berkhamsted, the seat of the Prince of Wales, in 1361. The Prince and Princess were on the point of departing for Aquitaine. King Edward and Queen Philippa, with the Dukes of Clarence, of Lancaster and York, Lord Edmond, afterwards Earl of Cambridge, and their children were present. Froissart was Clerk of the Chamber to the Queen. He heard a knight talking to the ladies. He told them that there was a book in England called the "Brute," full of wondrous prophecies. According to that book the Crown was not to come to the Prince of

Arthur and
the Table
Round.

"Brute :"
prophecy of
Lancastrian
greatness.

Wales nor to the Duke of Clarence, but to the House of Lancaster. It was seven years and more before the birth of Henry, Earl of Derby. But the chronicler adds that he lived to see that same earl King of England as Henry the Fourth. He repeats this story in another place, and, in fact, the Chronicle was probably written chiefly for the sake of the story. It was quite proper in the time of the Tudors, when the Chronicle began to be read, to believe that such prophecies concerning the House of Lancaster had been uttered more than a hundred years ago.

From the same literary fraternity proceeded the Chronicle of Monstrelet, which is put forth ^{E. de} as a continuation of Froissart, and which brings ^{Monstrelet.} the narrative down to 1444. De Coucy takes up the thread, and carries it on to 1461. Cambrai is indicated as the place of Monstrelet. Possibly there is some improvement in judgment and falling off of style in this writer, as compared with Froissart. But there is not the slightest reason to doubt that both Chronicles are of the time of Henry VIII. The object of the artists is to cast pleasing pictures from the camera of fancy athwart the intolerable darkness of the preceding ages.

The Chronicle of Comines, who is referred to Argenton, covers the period 1464-1483. The ^{Comines.} work was published in Paris in 1524, but contained only the first six books, which bring the narrative to the year 1477. The Chronicler says that he wrote at the instigation of the Archbishop of Vienne. He is in any case a clergyman, ^{His manner.} and looks upon History through the medium of theological theory. His favourite adage is, "*Providence would have it so.*" He tells us that the Peace of Amiens, 1475, was believed by some to have been

made by the Holy Spirit. All men "founded themselves on prophecies"—that is, on supernatural revelations. A white pigeon had been found on the tent of the King of England on the day of the review; it would not stir for all the noise of the host. Some thought there had been rain, and that the pigeon had lighted on the loftiest tent to dry itself. The Chronicler says naïvely that a Gascon gentleman who disliked the peace gave that common-sense explanation.

Comines allows us to see under what influences the dark tales concerning Richard III. or Louis XI. have been composed. The course of events was held to be a religious drama. War itself was sent as a divine chastisement upon princes and peoples, and the chief victims of civil broils must necessarily be regarded as the chief criminals.

The pleasing style of the work has deluded many critics into the belief that it is a contemporary record. And somewhat fulsome praise has been lavished on Comines, as if he were the founder of Modern History. He is certainly superior to the Benedictines, but he writes, like them, at a distance from his objects, and is in sympathy with the system of chroniclers who under the Tudors unfold the tragedies which led to the overthrow of the House of York and the establishment of the Lancastrian line.

It is, perhaps, sufficient to observe in general terms that the legends of the Press, together with the internal evidence of the Chronicles, suffice to establish a close connection between the printers and booksellers of the Low Countries and their patrons and those of England. There was essentially one close corporation, the guiding spirits of which must have been the most intelligent of the clergy. The legend that Caxton

began his career as member of the Guild of St. John at Bruges coincides with the above particulars. Except by strict co-operation of French and English scholars, the dogma of French and English history of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries could not have been elaborated in the pleasing and highly artistic manner which recommended it to the nobles of the court of the Tudors.*

It will be necessary only, by a few examples taken from chroniclers who were writing under Henry VIII., to show that they were following, as it were like school-boys, a copy set them by the literary authorities of the time, and that English story had become a branch of the Tudor establishment.

A life of Edward V. and of Richard III. has been ascribed to Sir Thomas More for no other reason than that his was one of the conspicuous names of the time. There is not the slightest reason for imputing to him any of the writings, either good or bad, which have been published under his name. Polydore, writing in the time of Edward VII., dismisses the subject of his martyrdom in a few graceful lines, and says nothing whatever of any of his literary achievements. Erasmus indulges in vague eulogies. It was not until thirty years after More's death that he was discovered as an English historian.

Sir Thomas
More: Lives
of Edward
V. and
Richard III.
ascribed to
him.

This unknown chronicler, then, proceeds to intensify the odious picture of Richard handed down by Polydore. The habit had begun of considering political and ecclesiastical opponents as "men of sin," and of pursuing imaginative researches into the evils

* Cf. Mr. Blades' "Life and Typography of William Caxton," 1861, i. 77, 81, 277; ii. 110.

of their infantile or ante-natal life. Richard was born with teeth in his head and with his feet foremost, according to the general report, which, as the Yorkist critic, Buck, was later to remark, never proceeded from Richard's mother. It was quite logical to assume that a fiendish life must have had a fiendish beginning. He was cold, merciless, ambitious, but brave, incapable of friendship, reckless of human life. The tale is repeated that he murdered Henry VI. in the Tower with his own hands. Thus the name of Thomas More—the gentle spirit whose virtues appear to be revealed by the pencil of Holbein as by the pen of Erasmus—has been used to sanction the conventional odium in which the last of the Yorkist princes was held.

To Fabian, Alderman of London, has been imputed the "Concordance of Stories," printed by Fabian. Pynson in 1516. The personality of Fabian is entirely unknown, as the inquiries of Sir H. Ellis have shown. It is one more example of fictitious authorship dictated by booksellers' and writers' interests, designed perhaps to please the Fathers of the City. The work is plainly the production of a clergyman. He mentions among his sources the Chronicle ascribed to Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence, which was perhaps composed at some time in the late fifteenth century; for it extends from the Creation of the World down to the year 1457.

Since we are studying a European system of Chronicle-writing, it may be well to remind the reader of the clue which thus leads from London to Florence, as one of the earliest fifteenth-century seats of culture. Antoninus himself depends on the Villani Chronicles, which have been assigned in the system of tradition to the fourteenth century, but with little or no reason. It

is more probable that they were begun in the time of the Medici in the same spirit of romance, and with the same system of continuation we have elsewhere noted.

The Fabian chronicler follows the few Benedictine works as yet known. He alludes to Gildas and the St. Albans Chronicle, but Matthew Paris is not yet known. As an illustration of the entirely anachronistic view of the past may be mentioned the fact that he conceives of Brute the Trojan as he would conceive of a contemporary noble warrior, clad in a suit of armour. Then, again, it is significant that the engraved portraits of the kings of England and of France appear to have been all executed from two blocks. There is no more perspective than in a Chinese picture. He can readily deduce English story from Brute down to Henry VIII., because the whole is an epic, fresh and smooth from the mint. Richard III. points a moral equally with any Homeric hero. He is born, and comes to the throne, and dies that he may remind us of the punishment of sinners. Fabian gives no date of day or month for important occurrences simply because he had no Registers. Horrible executions and deaths are in great demand with his readers, and he takes care to supply them with these sensations. He is one of the first to attempt the invention of a history, consisting of bare lists of names, for the corporation of the City, now conscious of its growing wealth and power in the State.

It is a great illusion to suppose that the succession of City fathers or officials from Norman times is genuine. And the like remark applies to the pretended antiquities of all our great cities. If you compare Fabian with Stow of the Elizabethan time, who prefixes to his "Survey" a meagre Benedictine tract bearing the name of Fitzstephen, you will find that nothing

whatever had been written down concerning the antiquities of London before the establishment of the printing-presses.

A quasi-historical work called "The Pastime of the People" is said to have been produced about Rastell, 1529. 1529 by John Rastell, of whom nothing is really known. We have simply before us another edition of the "Winter Fireside Tales," in which our ancestors delighted as yielding them the kind of amusement which the reading aloud of novels may now afford to the family circle. The chronicler follows, and can do no more than follow, the "Polychronicon" of the Benedictines, Caxton and Fabian. He begins with the fantastic myth of Diocletian and his thirty-two daughters, and the derivation of the name Albion from the youngest of them, Albine. He seems to have some doubt of it, but proceeds to speak with more confidence of Brute and the Trojan origin of the British people, after the age of giants had come to an end. He then follows the Benedictines "Gildas," "Geoffrey," and "Bede"; offers a string of biographical notices extending to the end of the reign of Richard III., who is, as usual, both by birth and nature, a monster rather than a man.

The Chronicle ascribed to Edward Hall, a lawyer and judge in the Sheriff's Court (for so he Hall. is designated), was printed at Grafton's Press in 1548. No more is known of Hall than of Thomas More. The interest of the booksellers is here to cultivate the patronage of the young wits who were beginning to read these stories in the Inns of Court. The political interest is, as usual, the Lancastrian dogma of the Union of the Two Houses. The Shakespearian drama lies here in germ. Hall constantly coincides with Polydore, the

general truth being that they both followed the orthodox copy set them, but Hall, perhaps, with less judgment than Polydore. It has been said of Fabian and Hall that their Chronicles are "written in a dull and tedious manner, without any exercise of taste or judgment, with an absolute want of discrimination as to the comparative importance of the facts;" that they offer "masses of matter which only a modern reader of a peculiar taste, or a writer in quest of materials, would now willingly peruse." And yet without attention to them we have no proper understanding of the poetic invention from which an early story entirely sprang. Notwithstanding the above strictures, the reader will find in the vigorous English of Hall and in the dramatic power with which the tragical tales about the Duke of Gloucester are told, the explanation of the manner in which the Art of a guild becomes the Truth of belief for the uncritical multitude.

Another Chronicle assigned to the Grafton Press (1543) is that under the name of Harding, which is brought down to the year 1464, and ^{Harding.} is continued by Grafton. Such are the statements; but the internal evidence points still to the literary society of monks and canons and friars. It is the ex-Carmelite Bale who first pretends to inform us about Harding as a gentleman and soldier, a friend of the House of Percy. The old fables of an early past reappear; and that of Brute is employed for the dishonest purpose, elsewhere betrayed, of making out the dependence of the Scottish on the English Crown. It is an illustration of the fine belief in these inventions which had been fixed in the English mind, that the homage of the Scottish kings is traced up to Lochrine the son of Brute. Other forgeries in the same interest have duly found their place in the

collection of the toilsome but too credulous Rymer of the reign of Queen Anne.

The true method of studying these Chronicles is always to begin at the end, because we there discover the passions and the interests under which the writer works. The Court interest is in this case obvious. The king's title to all his lands is made out : to England and Wales on the strength of the tale of Brute, and the sequent tales of Saxons and Normans. The Plantagenet tales supply the title to Scotland. Is it not written that John Balliol * resigned the gift and right into the hands of King Edward ? Why should it now be void and repugned ? To France the king is entitled because Edward IV. descended from St. Louis ; to Normandy and Guienne and Poitou, through Queen Eleanor ; to Anjou, by Geoffrey Plantagenet ; to Ireland, by King Henry le Fitz and Maude. The right by blood descent to Leon and Castile is also asserted.

The impression of a desperate effort in fiction, principled or unprincipled, according as we use those terms, grows upon us in surveying the mass of these Chronicles, which must be dismissed with a swift and sweeping regard. Passing over those under the names of Lanquet and Cooper (1549), which once had their vogue, we come to that under Grafton's own name (1569). It shows how writers at that late date were still working over the same ground that had been chalked out by the Benedictines. The Chronicle covers the period 1189-1558. But Matthew Paris has not yet been discovered. Nor is there the slightest trace of the consultation of any public Records. Nothing, indeed, could be more alien from the purpose of

* See the extraordinary mass of English fable and Scottish counter-fable, all of the Tudor time, on this question : " Biogr. Brit., " s.v. Baliol.

the writer than to make exact statements about anything. Polydore's example has had no influence with him. He delights in seeing, hearing, and relating the impossible. He would excel St. Austin and the monks in audacious lies.

He cites St. Austin for the opinion that men were in the beginning of the world much larger and longer-lived than they are now. St. Austin had seen in Utica a human tooth equal in size to a hundred. "And I," exclaims our chronicler, "did see on the 10th day of March, 1564, the cheek-tooth of a man, and had the same in my hand, which was as great as a hen's egg, and the same did weigh ten ounces of Troy weight. And the skull of the same man, as I am credibly informed, is extant and to be seen, which will hold five pecks of wheat; and the shin-bone of the same man is also to be seen, which is reported to be six foot in length, and of a marvellous greatness."

The marvellous in Grafton.

In these methodical ravings the Greek mythology is still blent with the Biblical legends as sources of English history. Brute is traced up to Jupiter, and Jupiter is traced up to Japhet. Albion is contemporary with Saul, King of Israel. York, London, and Edinburgh were founded in the time of Rehoboam, son of Solomon. King Bladud, founder of Stamford, was contemporary of Amaziah, King of Judah, and Joash of Israel. King Lear and his daughters figure in a similar way. It appears that Cambridge was built 309 years before Christ, and the Tower of London about the same time. King Lud, the builder of Ludgate, flourished before Julius Cæsar.

Blending of Classical and Biblical legends.

The Incarnation fell in the time of King Cymbeline, who died in London. Britons first received the faith of Christ in the year of our Lord 188. And so the first

volume of fable gathers as it goes through the ages, until we arrive at the coronation of Edward IV. (1460).

In the second volume the Chronicle follows Comines, and repeats the old tales about the loves of Edward IV., and about the monstrous person and murderous deeds of Richard III. In later reigns the material is of the same kind as that to be found in the pages of Latimer or of Foxe: a series of hearsays, a fascinating string of tales about sieges and peaces, and rebellions; of committals to the Tower, beheadings, dying speeches, and the like. The Chronicler appropriately closes ten years after the accession of Queen Elizabeth, with loyal compliments to that princess.

There seems to be no evidence that, so late as the tenth year of Queen Elizabeth, our historiographer had yet discovered the fine theory concerning King John and the Great Charter, which is one of the earliest data of our modern childhood. Here, perhaps, for the first time appears the famous Benedictine chronologer, Marianus Scotus. But still no Matthew Paris has been discovered, and if no Paris, no Magna Carta.

The first edition of Holinshed's Chronicles is of 1577.

Holinshed,
1577, con-
tinued to
1586.

The list of the sources is, as usual, Classical and Benedictine, with Froissart and Monstrelet.

The name of Matthew Paris at last appears, but the "Greater History" imputed to him could hardly have been in the writer's hands. Here too, perhaps, is the fit mention of the Venerable Bede, instead of Bede of the venerable monastery of Wearmouth. But the names of authors show a considerable enlargement on the Benedictine material available in the time of the earliest Tudor Chroniclers. More classical authors have also become known.

But in the list of Holinshed's sources the mention

of John Stow is especially noteworthy. Stow has lent the chronicler "diverse rare monuments, ancient writers, and necessary register books of his, out of his own library." We have arrived at the time of the first Society of Antiquaries in London. They were men who deserve all praise for their love of country, and for their diligence in collecting and editing what purported to be the monuments of its past. They had, in common with men of their class, a strong tendency to credulity, and were entirely without critical training. Some of them were exposed to persecution because they meddled so much with Popish books, as they were called, which were then the only sources of information. Others were timid and superstitious. It is no wonder, under these conditions, that the stream of fable flowed on, almost unchecked. A moderate scepticism, however, began to make itself felt toward the end of the century.

Stow, the antiquary, has a higher repute than his contemporary, Grafton. His work, the "Annals," was continued by Howes to 1614. The sources are still our old acquaintances, Gildas, Geoffrey, Sigebert of Gemblours, the Benedictines. Matthew Paris puts in an appearance, not, however, as author of the "Greater" or the "Lesser History," but of a "Golden History." The chronicler thinks it necessary to offer afresh what they designate a "brief proof of Brute." Here we observe that kind of reasoning, which is not yet extinct, from consent and use of opinion to matter of fact.

"You must not blow away with so light a breath," says the Chronicler to the impugners of these old stories, "the authority of so many grave testimonies, the succession of so many princes, the founders of so many monuments, and laws, and the

Stow:
"Annals"
continued by
Howes to
1614.

Defence of
Brute.

ancient honours of the nation, that first with public authority received Christianity." He then proceeds to cite his witnesses. They are Gildas and Nennius before the Conquest ; then Sigebert's Chronicle, Henry of Huntingdon, the "Golden History" imputed to Matthew Paris, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Matthew of Westminster, Giraldus Cambrensis, Ranulph of Chester, the "Polychronicon," Hoveden, Gervase, Simeon of Durham, Peter Langtoft.

Stow had, moreover, a French Chronicle in verse. He had Alanus ab Insulis on the "Prophecies of Merlin." He had the treatise of Sir John Price in defence of British History, John Leland, John Copgrave, Robert Kehog's "Reports of Law," Fabian, Grafton, Lanquet, Cooper, and Lambarde's "Perambulation of Kent."

On the other hand, the critics of the story of Brute are John of Wheathamsted, who said there was no such thing in Roman History ; Petit, a Frenchman, who attacked Geoffrey of Monmouth as the forger of British History. Here Stow admits that he cannot believe all he reads in Geoffrey ; for example, the tale of the green children caught in the sea is incredible. The envious Italian, Polydore, with one dash of the pen cashiers sixty princes together, with all their histories and historians, yea, and some ancient laws also. Most inconsiderate was such conduct on the part of Polydore. There were other sceptics, but as they did not understand English or Welsh, their arguments are not to be regarded.

Howes, in his "Historical Preface," as he calls it, refers to the attack of William of Newburgh on Geoffrey as distinguished more by system than by judgment. Homes supposes that William of Newburgh wrote in 1165, and was the first to attack Geoffrey ; whereas

Newburgh could not have been writing until the latter half of the fifteenth century, at the earliest.

The industrious William Camden's "Britannia" appeared in 1586. If industry and love of country could have discovered our past, Camden would have enlightened Englishmen on their history. The reading of his preface to the edition of 1607 inspires us with respect for the man, as attention to the body of his work may convince us that it was impossible for him to extricate himself from the mesh of Benedictine fables. All the trouble and the travel in the world will not make a man more than a collector of curiosities if he be no born critic. And here is the good Master of Westminster School still talking about Brutus, and planting him, on the authority of Geoffrey, in the year B.C. 1108. Yet Camden cites the objections of Wheathamsted and others to the story of Brute, and proposes some other etymologies of Britain than those sanctioned by authority.

Camden :
"Britannia,"
1586.

Speed, who was in debt to Sir R. Cotton, openly discusses the question of the Trojan descent as one of sentiment, not of critique. It is, he says, a praiseworthy thing to challenge descents from famous personages, and therefore let us listen to Geoffrey of Monmouth. He has brought us to rank with the rest of the Gentiles who claimed to be offspring of the gods. Brute conquered this island B.C. 1059, in the time of Eli the priest. The opinion of Geoffrey is naturally much applauded. But Speed goes on to discuss the arguments about Brute at length. It seems that Brute is becoming incredible, although a writer must not express himself too sharply on that side. Gildas, Bede, William of Malmesbury, are coming to be preferred to that position as authorities

Speed :
"History
of Great
Britain,"
1614.

of English History which they have enjoyed until this day.

Daniel, when he writes on general historical principles, adopts the tone of the critic or even of the sceptic. He shows in his preface that the practice had been to go to monastic Registers and Catalogues of Kings, and thence to deduce a Royal Succession. But Daniel asks how came the British Kings with a Catalogue? and finding no satisfactory answer, modestly resolves to begin with William the Bastard. He would draw a line at that point, and rebuke the curiosity which explored our earlier time. The beginnings of peoples, he says, are obscure as the sources of great rivers. If we could ascertain them, there would be little pleasure or profit in our success. Poverty, piracy, robbery and violence—these are the spring-heads of nations. Heroic and miraculous beginnings are but an abuse of our credulity. States, like individuals, “show best at their maturity, not in their cradle.” The object of the student is not to amass a quantity of matter, but to improve his intelligence. Human nature is always the same. Virtues and vices recur. Like causes have like effects, and every event has its precedent and its consequent. In short, History repeats itself.

In this truly scientific spirit Daniel limited himself to the period from the Norman Conquest to the end of the reign of Edward III. He appears to have had some work ascribed to Matthew Paris in his hand. Yet when he writes of Charters he must need trace them back to Henry I., and beyond him to Edward the Confessor, in the darkness which he professedly closes to our curiosity. Another example of his want of attention to the nature of his sources is in his account

Daniel
as a critic,
1562-1619.

of Wiclif. Though Daniel was hostile in theory to the monks, it has been remarked that he has taken from them the envious account of the mysterious divine of Balliol College. In short, when it comes to practice, Daniel is found to be no better critic than his predecessors. The Table of Remarkable Occurrences, appended at the end of each reign, reveals, so to speak, the habit of thought, the structural basis on which the artistic edifice is reared. Daniel will as readily quote Sir John Hayward as any earlier writer for the statement of a dreadful earthquake in the second year of William II., or Holinshed for similar violences of Nature in that time. Curiously, Daniel supposes the Norman times to have been ignorant and superstitious and prone to exaggeration in their stories. He is not aware that his own times begot these stories. It signifies, in fact, very little whether he cites William of Malmesbury or Sir John Hayward for these prodigious events; the monk and the knight were, in fact, nearly contemporaries. But the reign of Edward III. is quite as marvellous as any of the Norman reigns. In the thirty-fourth year, says Daniel (if we may credit the Dominican Nic. Trivet's "History"), there was not only great mortality, but two castles were seen in the air, out of which there seemed to sally ^{Castles in the air.} several troops of armed men, who fought for a time. One castle was in the south-east, the other in the south-west. The battle of these black and white aerial troops is described. There are a number of other similar prodigies scattered through the pages.

Such is the irony of the subject, Daniel ends at the very point where a man of his principles should have begun, namely, when public Records were said to have been kept, however faintly. Or had he been strict in his

application of his principle, he would have advanced up the stream of time towards the obscure, instead of planting himself at an epoch which is, in fact, equally obscure with that of British kings. But with Daniel History was still a deduction from the past to the present, not, as it has yet to be understood, a deduction from the known and visible present to the obscure and unknown past.

Hayward, writing about the same time, continues to beg the critical question, and to write Histories of English kings in the dramatic spirit of Livy. Sir Richard Baker (1568-1645) in his Chronicles offers us a most entertaining narrative, distinguished by its fine vigorous English style. Baker is a good classical scholar, but critical habits are foreign to his mind. His sources are, as usual, chiefly Benedictine, Gildas, and the rest. But at last it appears that Brute and his creator have had their day. A distaste for Geoffrey of Monmouth has set in; for it is no distaste for incredible stories, as such, that induces the denial of Brute. Baker is full of curious tales, which he either relishes himself or serves up for the delectation of the prototypes of Sir Roger de Coverley. And while he is full of vulgar wonder, he is indifferent towards objects that may well excite intelligent wonder; that is, the great intellectual achievements of his own time. It is impossible to read without a smile his account of the great men who flourished in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. After a list of names that have now become obscure or forgotten, he mentions the actors Alleyne and Burbage with high praise. But the mere playwrights Benjamin Jonson and William Shakespeare receive a cold compliment at the end of his list. Whenever the legend of Shakespeare shall be thoroughly examined, this passage should receive more special attention.

CHAPTER X.

THE INNS OF COURT—THE ROMANCE OF THE LAW.

To turn from the roar of the Strand or of Holborn into the quiet haunts of the lawyers among green trees and sparkling fountains is one of the keenest of pleasures to an Englishman who loves to meditate on the history of his country. In these retreats began to gather from the time of Henry VIII. the best scholars and wits, the ablest men in arts and arms, the travellers, and the pioneers of science. It is impossible to think of any numerous society of the kind until that reign; for, indeed, there is no evidence, in buildings or in literature, that it existed before the civil factions were giving way to an attempt at a settled constitution.

There was next to nothing in the shape of legal books to be studied, and the consequence was that the brightest spirits gave themselves to the study of poetry and literature, and to the cultivation of the rhetorical resources of our mother tongue. Yet the efforts to make out an antiquity for English laws are worthy of attention.

The story of the Fortescue Tracts is another example of the system of collaboration to which our English story was due. By about the middle ^{Fortescue} _{Tracts.} of the sixteenth century nothing whatever had been heard of Sir John Fortescue as an author. John Leland

knows nothing of the tracts. The rise of the Fortescue legend may be traced in the untrustworthy Bale and Pits, who followed Leland, and in MSS. which came into the possession of Selden, and other antiquaries of the reign of Elizabeth. At that time it was desired to have some history of the Inns of Court; and in the utter ignorance of the pre-Tudor past it was agreed to accept the statement that they had been flourishing so early as the time of Henry VI. At the same time the attempt was made to frame a list of Chancellors, and the powerful Fortescue family was gratified by the eminence thus conceded to their ancestor.

Coke and others extolled Fortescue as a great author; but the utter poverty of the tracts ascribed to him, nay, of the productions imputed to Coke himself, is the most decisive proof that can be imagined of the little progress that had been made in the definition of the idea of Law during the reign of Elizabeth. The title of one of the Tracts is "On the Praises of the Law," and it shows little more than the fact that the laudation of constitutional government rather than the observance of it began to set in during our great literary period.

With regard to the treatise on the "Difference between an Absolute and Limited Monarchy," Selden had a MS. which passed into the Bodleian Library. Archbishop Laud and Sir Kenelm Digby had other MSS., Sir Robert Cotton a third. The latter bore an inscription purporting to be from the hand of Sir Adrian Fortescue, written in the year 1532, and was the fairest and most complete of all. This Sir Adrian is said to have been beheaded for taking part in an insurrection under Henry VIII. The copy of Archbishop Laud, however, appeared to be the oldest.

Such were the particulars given by Mr. Fortescue Aland, afterwards Lord Fortescue, in his edition of 1714. As before remarked, the silence of John Leland seems decisive against the genuineness of the copy dated 1532.

When we inspect the contents of this book, we find that they reflect the state of mind of politicians, moving about in a world not yet realized, and groping after the elements of a constitutional life. The difference between a "Royal Dominion" or "Absolute Monarchy" and a "limited or political monarchy" is that between government by laws of the king's arbitrary will and government by laws made with the consent of his subjects. The reader will observe that the memory of the turbulent times of the nobles with their bands of retainers is still quite fresh, although referred to a distant time.

The indispensable Brute must be conceived as having brought a settled Constitution to the island, founded on an agreement with his followers. Brute and the Constitution. The fable being dogma, so also is it dogma that "there never was an absolute government in England." The rule, "*By their fruits ye shall know them,*" is applied to the Governments of France and England, to the disadvantage of the former. The writer represents that the King of France's revenues are double those of England because the former takes what he pleases, and the latter what the people will please to give him. He has some curious reasoning by which he would prove that a poor king must imply a poor people, and deals with the ordinary and extraordinary expenses of the Crown. He is alive to the danger of subjects becoming too powerful; and here again reflects the turbulence of the aristocracy in his allusions to French and Scottish Chronicles.

There are more curiosities in these Lancastrian Tracts. They hint that the very foundations of Right had to be laid in England, and that laws and constitutions are being freely forged in the interests of parties. Church sympathies are also betrayed in the upholding of the Papal and Hierarchical pretensions, and of the inspired Canon Law, derived from the forged Benedictine *Decretum*. These obscure writers are full of "talk of Chronicles." That is to say, they are beginning to turn over the pages of the Black Monks and Black Friars—the works imputed to Peter of Poitiers, Ralph de Diceto, and others, which have newly come into their hands.

In this strange tract the attempt is renewed to flatter the vulgar vanity of Englishmen who believe themselves to be physically and morally far superior to the Frenchmen. The French are cowards, says this strange "Chief Justice," and therefore do not rebel like the Englishmen. In England one thief is equal to two true men. In France one thief is only equal to half a true man. Consequently, an English thief must be better than his French counterpart in the ratio of four to one. He exults, this curious minister of the law, in the fact that more men are hanged in England in a year for robbery and manslaughter than during seven years in France. The poor-spirited Scottish thieves, again, are unequal to the daring of robbery from the person; they must be content to be hanged for petty larceny.

The might of England depends on her poor Archers, and unless the archers be supported the realm will be destroyed. You cannot put down an insurrection without the Archers. The poor men have always been the authors of insurrection, and have compelled the thrifty to go along with them; and

The Archers
of England.

if you make the poor man still poorer, you may expect the more insurrection. The argument is addressed to those who advocate an absolute monarchy in England. The writer says, "You ought not to weaken the Commons." He means you cannot put the Commons down. He makes a virtue of necessity; he accepts a limited monarchy, because the stubborn yeomen have bent their formidable bows, and have resolved there should not be a Tyranny in England.

The Civil Wars had tried and proved the prowess of the British Archers. Comines bears his admiring testimony to their worth. Sir Walter Scott, following him, has brilliantly depicted them in the court of Louis XI. The archers must have been the champions of the only freedom known.

The yew tree is sacred in the eyes of the Englishman. The bow is the instrument of our freedom. Well may Hugh Latimer remind The Sacred Bow. young Englishmen of the fact. The art of shooting, he says, is a gift of God that He hath given us to excel all nations withal—God's instrument, whereby He hath given us many victories against our enemies. To practise shooting is a sacred duty. Latimer's father and all good yeomen thought it an essential of education. The boy was taught to lay his body in his bow, and to draw with the strength of his body rather than with his arms, as other nations do. Stow gives a glimpse of the youths of London engaged in martial exercises on holidays after every evening prayer, while the maidens danced to a timbrel under the eye of masters and mistresses in the garlanded streets.

It is not without reason that the memory of the English robbers and outlaws have been glorified in our ballad poetry, and that Shakespeare The Outlaw Archer.

himself did not scruple to represent a Crown Prince of the fifteenth century as an associate of that class. It was felt, as it was felt about the Highwaymen of the eighteenth century, that bad times and the cruel pressure of poverty had forced some of the most manly spirits in England into the woods and upon the roads. The glorification of the Outlaw shows that there was no trust in the law. The love of the Outlaw as the friend of the poor and the redresser of social inequalities shows that there was no appeal from the iniquities of the oligarchy save to the stout arm and the strong bow. It is hardly correct, then, to say, with Hallam, that highway robbery was from the first a national crime, because a crime is called into existence by general sentiment, and is then defined by the law. But if the documents imputed to the reign of Edward III. and Richard II. may be used as evidence, it is clear that neither sentiment nor law had condemned robbery. The grant of Charters of pardon to Robbers was common, and was not protested against until about that time. Where authority is so ready to pardon, its own weakness is proved, and the strength that is arrayed against it. The documents, however, are not genuine. They were designed to give ancient sanction to Tudor practices. It may seem a sudden and abrupt transition to pass from the haunts of legislators in London to the green glades of Sherwood. But the transition is suggested by the reading of Fortescue and much other contemporary evidence. We are still in a time when law meant the arbitrary pleasure of the king or his clerical and noble advisers, and when the name of it was detested as synonymous with odious injustice and oppression by the mass of the people. It is one of the most remarkable contrasts of the sixteenth

century : the talk on the part of clerical chroniclers of Magna Carta and the noble services rendered to the cause of English liberty by archbishops, bishops, and abbots ; and the passionate defiance and contempt of the Order breathed in those animated ballads of "Robin Hood," which sprang from the very heart and core of the English people.

Latimer tells how on one occasion he gave notice overnight that he would preach in a certain town on the following holiday. It was on his ^{Robin Hood's Day.} way from town. He expected to see a large congregation, but found the church door fast locked. At last one of the parishioners came and told him it was Robin Hood's Day, and all the parish was gone abroad to gather for Robin Hood. The good bishop was indignant that neither his eloquence nor his rochet was regarded, and he had to give place to Robin Hood's men. It was no laughing matter, it was a weeping matter, that the memory of a traitor and a thief should be thus preferred to God's Word. But the popular cult of Robin Hood was rooted in something deeper than the mere neglect of preaching on the part of the bishops, as Latimer thinks.

The popular heart is always right. It knew itself when it chose the outlaw archer for its ideal, and the love of the Lincoln green was in- ^{The Cult of Robin Hood.} compatible with reverence for the rochet of a bishop. In fact, the old English ballads of Robin Hood are among the most precious sources of English history. There is to be seen the splendid reflection of the true Englishman of our most glorious periods—the man who created the liberties which slowly and reluctantly found recognition in the parchments of Church lawyers. In them stand revealed the inveterate enemies

of that liberty—the luxurious bishop and abbot, the tyrannical sheriff, upon whom are poured streams of joyous satire. The legend about Robin himself plants him in the far-distant time of Henry II., a youth of noble blood, high-spirited and generous, juggled out of the remains of his patrimony by a sheriff and an abbot in league. So he was driven to the forests to wage war against the oligarchy on behalf of the poor and the needy, the desolate and the oppressed. He made churchmen disgorge their ill-gotten purses. Michael Drayton well understood, as a poet, what the legend meant—

“From wealthy abbots’ chests and churls’ abundant store,
 What oftentimes he took, he shared amongst the poor ;
 No lordly bishops came in lusty Robin’s way,
 To him before he went, but for his pass must pay.”

The matchless Archer reigns in Sherwood till age creeps upon him, and he must seek the aid of a leech. And then the lancet of the Benedictine Prioress of Kirkley, his cousin, treacherously bleeds him to death.

We understand, in these days, better than the scholars of the Tudor period could do, the theory of Art, and can trace the rise of this great Figure to the passions that stirred in English hearts at the very dawn and beginning of our national life. This “gentlest of Thieves,” in the phrase of Camden, is our first National Hero, because the kind of thieving recommended by his example was held a virtue rather than a crime. He is our Archer-god, by whose Bow and whose pity men were wont to swear, whose annual feast was more endeared than that of any saint in the ecclesiastical Calendar ; whose grave was visited by pilgrims, who left his name to a Well, whose weapons were still shown down to our own times in Fountains Abbey. It is

Love of
 England
 condensed
 upon Robin.

a fine testimony that a cool writer like Ritson bears to the worth of an ideal which he confounds with an actual historic person. He describes Robin as "a man who, in a barbarous age and under a complicated Tyranny, displayed a spirit of freedom and independence which has endeared him to the common people, whose cause he maintained, and which, in spite of the malicious endeavours of pitiful monks, by whom history was consecrated to the crimes and follies of titled ruffians and sainted idiots, to suppress all record of his patriotic exertions and virtuous acts, will render his name immortal."

These praises are, in fact, due to multitudes of hearty yeomen and peasantry whose lives and serious aspirations have been gathered up under the common name and symbol of this worship. Nor is it less pleasing to observe how into the same ideal there enter the natural joys and gaieties of our old English life, which so genially rebuke the affectations of the cloister. Robin loves to dance with the village lasses round the Maypole when the moon is up, as the English did in the time of Stow. He is tender towards Women; when the Black Monks are in his power, he makes them promise that they will meddle with maids and wives no more. When on his death-bed, and Little John begs to be suffered to burn Kirkley Hall in vengeance on the cruel prioress, Robin answers, "Nay, nay, I never hurt a woman in all my life, nor yet a man in woman's company; and as it has been during my life, so shall it be at my end." He will not shed the blood of his pursuer, the Bishop of Hereford; he lets him off after he has sung a mass under the Greenwood tree.

The Symbol
of National
Interests.

When we recall the time at which the "Geste of

Robin Hood" was issued from the press of De Worde in Fleet Street, we may use the Ballads of the Archer as strong evidence of the state of popular feeling and imagination during the pre-Reformation period. They form a very strong indictment against the monastic clergy, their mendacity, their lust, their greed; they are indirectly a defence of the yeomen, the husbandmen, the poorer knights and squires, and all the respectable classes, against the monastic usurpations, and against the clerical administration in the hands of the high sheriffs. On the other hand, they betray no ill-will to the persons of the kings, who are depicted as good fellows, fond of adventure in disguise, and ready to extend the royal pardon to the freemen who have lived on their venison, and have constituted their parliament under the old oak. It cannot be said that there is any recognition of the majesty of the Common Law, before which kings and subjects must alike humble themselves. But an unwritten law, a solemn sense of right and wrong, is contained in the very lawlessness of the exiles of Sherwood, who appear devoutly to recognize the patronage of Our Lady.

To return from this digression to the Inns of Court. We may from the tract "On the Praises of Laws" sketch a picture of the society of the young nobles and gentlemen who there pursued all the elegant accomplishments of the time—singing, music, dancing. They read a little Roman Law on working days, and on holidays a little of Holy Scripture, and after service the Chronicles, which supplied in so great abundance food to the patriotic imagination. The Inns were the cradle of new-born civility.

It is quite possible and probable that, with the

exception of Paris, there was no French university where so many young men were found as in the Inns. Whether they were the school for the cultivation of all virtues and the eradication of all vices that the author pretends, is another matter. The whole picture is that of a beginning, a dawning conception of the need of study to the ruling classes, not so much of extant laws as of methods of trial and judgment, that the reproaches of barbarous ordeals and tortures may be done away. The fictions of ancient Laws prepare the way for actual legislation.

Passing by the fable about Littleton, reputed author of the work on Tenures, we do not and cannot move out of the region of mere conjecture as to the state of law and its administration until we arrive at Coke, so fondly called the Oracle of the Common Law, and his contemporaries Selden, Bacon, and others. And even then how dim and uncertain are the Institutes and Reports, especially when contrasted with the fulsome talk about Coke, against whom Blackstone launched a sneer that would have been undeserved had it been frankly stated that he was among the first to ascertain a Code of Law. But the antiquarian folly, the inveterate propensity to run everything into the mists of fable, the absolute inability to admit that any custom had a recent beginning, hides every fact from us.

The lawyers persisted in thinking of the Common Law as springing from sources as inscrutable as those of the Nile; and in talking about King Molmucius, then King Alfred, as legislators, and the like, when all the while they had not tracts enough on the subject to fill a moderate book-case. It was necessary to believe that primitive

Littleton.

Coke.

Inscrutable
Source of
Common
Law.

Britons and primitive Saxons had held the laws in memory alone. Local customs had become so various, it was necessary for King Alfred to construct a Dome Book for the use of the whole kingdom. It must be supposed that this book, after being extant for 600 years, had been lost in the time of Edward IV., which is, in fact, the highest point to which general reminiscence could reach.

The dogma of History demanded that the Danes should have had their part in legislation ; so that in the beginning of the Norman time three different systems must have prevailed in different parts of the kingdom. This theory is traceable to the Benedictines "Roger Hoveden" and "Ranulph of Chester." Then the great ecclesiastical portrait of Edward the Confessor shines out of the gloom. He must frame a new Digest for general use.

Another of the same fraternity, Eadmer, edited by Selden, would better this theory by making Edgar, the grandfather of Edward, the projector of the work. This, too, was believed, even, as it seems, by the powerful understanding of Selden. It was pleasing to the professor to consider that Alfred had been the founder, Edward the restorer, of Anglican Laws. And it was one of the great feats of the ecclesiastics to represent the Confessor as the protector of English liberties in so far distant a time.

It was believed, again, still on the statements of the Roman Law in England. Black Monks, that the Civil or Roman Law had made its way hither from Bologna in the twelfth century, when a new and holy Roman Empire began. Then there had been strife between the upholders of the two systems of Law ; but the free constitution of England had flourished upon that strife ;

and the collection of maxims and customs known as the Common Law had gradually been made. A ^{The Common} Folk-Right had been established, based on ^{Law.} immemorial usage. A Common Council of Wise Men had been formed; magistrates had been elected by the people; the Crown had been made hereditary; military service of landholders had been established. There had been no right of primogeniture, so necessary to an oligarchic government. The King's Court had been movable, and had been held on the Church feasts of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide. There had been county courts, presided over by the Bishop and the Sheriff. Trials were by Ordeal, or by morsel of Execration, or by Wager of Law, or by Jury.

Then the Normans came in. Our lawyers of the Tudor period believed that the Norman kings had found favour with the Black Monks by ^{Enslavement} exempting the sanctity from the secular power, ^{under the} and by separating the ecclesiastical courts from the ^{Normans.} civil. The Normans had also depopulated vast tracts of land for the purposes of the Chase. They had made the Game, some said, the sole property of the King by the forest-laws. The King's Court had been erected, and the Chief Justice, with almost boundless authority, had become the proper Tyrant of the people, and the rival of the King himself.

The Chief Justice was originally of the Order of Black Monks. Proceedings were carried on in ^{The Chief} the French language, and the judges were ^{Justice.} Frenchmen who understood not our mother-tongue. This went on for 300 long years, till a heroic King conquered the French abroad and their language at home. Yet a mischievous subtle scholastic system of jurisprudence had replaced the simple wisdom of our

Saxon forefathers. The custom of Trial by Combat had also come in, and the fiction of feudal tenure of land.

The nation was enslaved. It lay at the mercy of four foreign ecclesiastics, devoted to a foreign rule and a foreign superstition. The laws were in an unknown tongue. The people were treated as children, debarred from many pleasures by day, and sent to bed by sound of bell at eight o'clock each night. The King was a Despot; the sole landlord, the licensed pillager of his submissive vassals, the head of an army of 60,000 men. He had, however, no fleet. The mass of the people were mere bondmen. Life was hardly worth living to any but the clergy and the barons, or, in short, to a small Oligarchy. It was, in the words of Blackstone, "a complete and well-concerted scheme of servility" under which Englishmen languished, or were believed to have languished.

But Henry I., the fine Clerk, took counsel of the Black Monks, and restored the glorious Constitution of Edward the Confessor. Henry, as Spelman believed, abolished Curfew; he published again the Confessor's Code. He favoured the freedom of the Church. Yet the restitution of the glorious Confessor's system was not complete, and Henry's reforms were forgotten as soon as they were established. It was believed that in Henry II.'s time a Chief Justice, Glanville, had written on the codification of the laws. At last there uprose that great monarch whom the poets call Longshank, whose physical stature corresponded to that of his mind. He was head and shoulders above his contemporaries. He was the English Justinian; he led our laws to victory. Yet before his time great battles of the Constitution had been fought and won. The Great Charter and the Forest Charter

Restoration
of the
Constitution.

Edward I.

had been wrested from King John and his son. The Bible of the Constitution had been delivered to the people. For all that, the Pope was our lord during those two reigns, and Chief Justice Bracton was showing the improvement of the constitution of a realm sold to the Pope.

But the change under Edward I. was nothing less than magical. Suddenly the Law stood revealed in her perfection like a statue from the hand of Phidias. Most marvellous! for Sir Matthew Hale does not scruple to affirm that more was done in the first thirteen years of his reign in the interests of distributive justice than in all the ages since his time. To enumerate the just deeds of Edward would be an endless task, said Blackstone in his later day. At last Englishmen, amused and tantalized so long by spectral Charters, could breathe freely and call their bodies and souls their own. Are not the principles contained in the treatises of Britton, Fleta, Hengham, and the rest, law to this day, or nearly so? demands Blackstone. At last Magna Carta begins to be *observed*. Yet military tenures continue to weigh down for many ages the rising head of English liberty.

But then in the reigns of the next Edwards our rulers began to take from us what the first Edward had given. The Pope had still to be fought with the weapon of *Præmunire*, and the Monks and Friars made the Laws of the Land an implement of persecution. For a hundred long years laws were silent amidst the din of arms, and there was no improvement of the perfect Constitution of Edward I. during the quarrel of the White and Red Rose factions. At last Lancaster triumphs, and Henry Tudor seizes the throne. But the Constitution is obliterated. The reign

The English
Justinian.

Contests
with the
Papal army
of monks.

of Henry VII. is remembered as the period of royal extortion, of penal legislation to that end, of the erection or revival of the hideous Star Chamber Court, the period of a swollen Treasury, an impoverished and wrathful people. There is, says Blackstone, hardly a statute in this reign introductive of a new law or modifying the old but what either directly or obliquely tended to the emolument of the Exchequer.

The reign of Henry VIII. is recalled as a time of strained prerogative and of pusillanimous parliaments, a time for the creation of an "amazing heap of wild and new-fangled treasons." After the brief sunshine of Edward VI.'s reign, religious slavery is re-established under his sister by bloody measures, which in turn are defeated by the accession of Queen Elizabeth. The religious liberties of the nation have now to be guarded in their infancy, against papists and other nonconformists by further sanguinary laws. The power of the Star Chamber is increased, and the High Commission Court is erected. The Parliaments are kept at an awful distance by the Queen, who had equal power to play the tyrant with the predecessors of her House. Perhaps she lacked the opportunity or the inclination. "Her days were not those golden days of a liberty that we formerly were taught to believe; for the true liberty of the subject consists not so much in the gracious behaviour as in the limited power of the sovereign."

During the reign of James I. the claim to absolute power inherent in the kingly office was made, and the people heard doctrines preached from the throne and pulpit subversive of liberty and property, and all the natural rights of humanity.

Extinction of
the Constitution
under
the Tudors.

The Constitution
dead
under the
Stuarts.

The morning of the next reign was overclouded, and though its noon brightened, the sun went down in blood, and left the whole kingdom in darkness. At last the People are heard of, and begin to make themselves felt through their leaders. The Petition of Right is a second Magna Carta. A great Rebellion breaks out; the Church and Monarchy are overturned, the sovereign is with deliberate solemnity tried, condemned, and executed. In the next reign, wicked, sanguinary, and turbulent as it was, English Liberty was at last completely restored, for the first time since its total abolition at the Norman Conquest. The Habeas Corpus Act is as a second or third Magna Carta; the Constitution arrives at its full vigour, and the true balance between liberty and prerogative is at last happily established by law in the reign of King Charles II. Yet our civil liberties were not fully and explicitly acknowledged and defined till the era of the happy Revolution.

Resurrection
of the
People.

Need I remind the reader of all that it has been found necessary to do, since the time of Blackstone, by way of completing the edifice of constitutional freedom? Need I recall the days of our own boyhood, or of times yet more recent? Shall I remind him that the word "Emancipation" has had a meaning, and a very precious meaning, for the ears of Jews and of Catholics within this generation? Or that it is even now only slowly dawning on the minds of the mass of our countrymen that a man may be none the less worthy a citizen and a patriot because he cherishes, and cherishing, dares to express, opinions concerning the nature of the gods diverse from those of the established cult? If English liberty has ever attained to adult maturity, it has

been only in these Victorian times in which we have lived.

The romantic story which has been briefly sketched from pages of the historians of the Law represents the English people as a Tantalus, or Sisyphus, condemned for unknown sins to grasp at fruits that are swept at the moment of fruition from out its reach, or to roll the burden of its oppressions uphill in vain and ceaseless efforts to be free. It is a tale replete at every point with self-contradiction and absurdity. At the close of the Lancastrian civil wars, says the learned judge, "a motion of general liberty had strongly pervaded and animated the whole constitution. Yet the particular liberty, the natural equality, and personal independence of individuals, were little regarded or thought of; nay, even to assert them was hinted as the height of sedition and rebellion. Our ancestors heard, with detestation and horror, those sentiments rudely delivered, and pushed to most absurd extremes by the violence of a Cade and a Tyler, which have since been applauded, with a zeal almost rising to idolatry, when softened and recommended by the eloquence, the moderation, and the arguments of a Sidney, a Locke, and a Milton."

The truth is, that not until long after those wars were over were the people taught to dream such dreams, and see such visions of an ideal English Constitution in the past. There is not the slightest reason for imputing any of the writings on the subject to an earlier time than the era of the Tudors and Stuarts. And the writings were composed under the influence of the Benedictines. It is they who represent the Abbot of Battle and the Prior of Lewes, joining with squires, yeomen, and tradesmen

The Tantalus
fable of the
Constitution.

Epoch of
the retro-
spective
dream.

in the rebellion of the Men of Kent. It is they who flatter the archers of England. It is they who grant under the name of Matthew Paris of St. Albans the Great Charter to Englishmen, undiscovered until late in the sixteenth century.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PUBLIC RECORDS.

I HAVE shown that English History in the sense of Romancing and Story-telling began with the Tudor period; I have now to point out that it was not until after the great Revolution of 1688 that History in the sense of contemporary record can be said to have properly begun.

Stow, writing about 1598, in his "Survey of London," is our earliest contemporary authority for the The Tower of London. buildings of the city. Unfortunately, Stow seldom offers glimpses of the London of his own observation. The industrious collector is always poring over his monkish MSS., and repeating the tales he finds therein. He knew nothing of the state of "Records" half a century before his time; but he is aware that Wakefield Tower and the Chapel of Julius Cæsar in the White Tower had long been used as Repositories. The early "Records" themselves would persuade us that they had been begun so early as the 14th year of Edward III.

We should reason strictly upon this question. One may assume that "Records" were made to be kept, and kept in order to be consulted. At what epoch can we first descry the studious antiquary wending his way thither? It will not be much later than the time when

the "Records" became an institution. But there was no known Society of Antiquaries until the reign of Queen Elizabeth, which consisted merely of a knot of the most distinguished scholars in London. The curious story has come down to us that it was only under Queen Elizabeth the Records began to be used. In the time of her brother, Edward VI., an officer of ordnance had stumbled upon a heap of parchments, the "Records," which had lain dormant for the space of a long hundred years.

Who is it that tells this singular story? It is Mr. Strype, the industrious old Essex clergyman, to whom we are indebted for so much material relating to the reign of Elizabeth—Mr. Strype, who died in 1737 at the great age of ninety-four. Writing in 1718, he tells us that William Bowyer in 1567 had digested the Records into six great volumes, covering the period from King John to Edward IV. But they have vanished! Then we hear of poor Prynne, who in his study of the "Records" had come upon "mere spurious forgery and imposture," and who had contemptuously denounced the indolent credulity of Coke and others. Yet Prynne himself did not see, or dared not avow, the whole of the imposture. He rejected Parliament Rolls of Edward III. He supposed that in dark times like the Wars of the Roses kings embezzled Records, or suppressed what was contrary to their interests. He found gaps in the series, he saw that they had been filled up out of "Matthew Paris" and the Benedictine faction. Yet he does not seem to have rejected the Chronology from Brute the Trojan to William the Norman, though he protests against "overmuch laziness and credulity."

At last, in the time of Queen Anne, a great stir was made, and several years were occupied, under the

direction of Lord Halifax, Bishop Nicolson, and other scholars in reducing to order the confused heaps of parchment in the Chapel of the White Tower. It does not appear, however, that there was anything of much value there for the purposes of matter-of-fact history.

Stow repeats the tale from the Monks, that the ^{Chancery Lane.} Chapel had been built by Henry III. for the custody of the Rolls; that it had been the House of Jewish Converts under the Carthusians, who describe them as *Cælicolæ Christi*, as in other of their writings. There is a fabulous system, as usual. A Rabbi is described as "Bishop of the Jews" in 1403, and so on. We only move into daylight, as our eye rests on the Renaissance monument of Dr. Young, Dean of York, 1516, a date nearly corresponding to that over the Arch of Lincoln's Inn opposite. The reader will not far err if he assumes that the fabrication of these stories about the Rolls was quite recent in that time. Strype says that in 1529, the year of Wolsey's fall, there was at the Rolls no more ancient Record than of the reign of Henry VII., with the exception of a few years of Richard III.

The question of Chronology is all-important; therefore I would once more insist that it is ^{Westminster.} impossible to find authentic Records in any precise sense of the events above the Tudor time. The documents relating to the question of the sepulture of the holy Henry VI., raised, it is said, in the year 1498, are in my opinion decisive of the question. I assume that they are genuine. If not, they are cleverly fabricated; but the argument is equally good. The story was current that the bones of the saintly king had been removed from Chertsey to Windsor by Richard III. : a story of which there was no proof. However, St.

George's, Windsor, Chertsey, and Westminster all put in their claims to be the receptacle of the relics. The question was referred to the Chancellor and the Council, and the decision was given in favour of Westminster. On what grounds?

The Abbot of Chertsey said that the tyrant Richard had violently exhumed and carried off the body against the consent of the Convent. The Dean of Windsor asserted that it had been done by the consent of the Chertsey monks, and further, that Henry had chosen Windsor for his resting-place. The Abbot of Westminster contradicted this assertion, and declared that Henry had chosen Westminster, which was the place of burial of his ancestors. Not one of the parties could produce a scrap of authentic written evidence as to the actual receptacle of his remains.

But the depositions of the Westminster witnesses are amusing and instructive. Not one of them dates by the year of the Lord; but each had his circumstantial story to tell of a visit of Henry VI. to the Abbey for the purpose of selecting his burial-place. A clerk of the King's Signet deposed to a visit "about twelve years before the King's death, between All-hallowtide and Candlemas." A blind barbour and servant (68) of the Abbot deposed to a visit "about the feast of Allhallowtide two or three years before the coming in of King Edward." The Falconer of the Abbot deposed uncertainly to "some time before the feld of Northampton." A Scrivener, aged 70, said the time of the visit was "the latter end of the 36th year of the King's reign." A Chanting priest (69) from Paul's Churchyard, said that he had been shown the place "diverse times before Yorke felde." Another Scrivener (63) said he had seen the will of Henry VI., devising his

sepulture, on the table of the clerk of the king's works. A servant of the late Prior Flete (66) deposed to having witnessed the visit of Henry VI. "about 40 year past," and repeated what he had heard from the Prior to the same effect with the other witnesses. A weaver (76) said he was present on the occasion of the visit "before Palm Sunday field, but how long before he now remembereth not." A marbler of London (66) defined the time as "the Friday before Allhallowesday next before the first feld of St. Albones;" and some of his mates had bargained with the king for his tomb to be made. They had received part payment, but nothing was done, because of the great trouble that followed. An old Cavendar of Westminster (90) deposed to the visit "about 40 years past, or els moore." Dan John Ramsay, an aged monk (83), deposed to his having received orders from the king himself as to the place of his sepulture. But, unlike many of the witnesses who pretended to remember the names of the great men in the king's company, the monk could neither remember who was present, nor how many years past it was. A London tailor (73) deposed that "about 44 year past" he heard say from the under-keeper of the St. Edward's shrine that King Henry VI. had chosen his sepulture on the north side of the shrine.

If you attempt to define the date of this Visit from the dreamy reminiscences of these aged witnesses by comparison with conventional English story, you must fix it in the year 1454, *or* 1457, *or* 1458, *or* 1460, *or* 1461. The judgment of the Privy Council is itself undated by the year of the Incarnation. It was given in favour of Westminster, on the ground that the holy king had chosen it, and also that it was regarded as the place of sepulture of kings. Yet, after all these solemn

proceedings, the remains of Henry VI., if they had ever been at Windsor, were never translated thence, nor was he ever canonized. The aspiring blood of Lancaster sank into the ground, and has left no trace behind.

Such was the state of mind of the teachers and the taught in English History that in 1555 the last Abbot could defend the Sanctuary and Tomb of Kings by going back to the foundation under King Lucius, although its condition was utterly dark to him 100 years before the time of his Address to the House of Commons. The system of fable about Westminster breaks in pieces and falls in ruin so soon as you attend to the state of men's minds during the early Tudor time. What was not then known has never since been discovered.*

The old Palace of Westminster was to Stow a place of legend rather than of reminiscence. It was a ruin in 1529 when Henry VIII. removed to The Chapter House at Westminster. York Place, afterwards known as Whitehall. The monkish tales about the old palace and the old kings were, as I have shown, beginning to be in circulation about that time. The Inscription relating to Edward I. has been traced to the time of the last Abbot, John Feckenham, who came back with his fourteen Black Monks in the reign of Queen Mary. I would emphasize the remark of Dean Stanley in his "Memorials" on the "pause and break" in English History denoted by the first Tudor, whose name is connected with the eastern chapel. Beyond him, our glance ever plunges into the obscure.

When did the Chapter House become a Record Office? It was in the year 1540 that the Abbacy was dissolved, and that the Chapter House became public

* See Appendix to Dean Stanley's "Memorials of the Abbey."

property. The Commons are said to have met in the Chapel of St. Stephen in 1547, and the Chapter House became a Record Office. What was the nature of the "Records," and what was doing during the reign of Queen Mary? We know not; but some idea of the loose habits of the time may be collected from the fact that the first Burial Register of the Abbey begins in 1606. The Record Office remained secret. And how significant is the picture sketched by Stanley and Mr. Rymer, the zealous compiler under Queen Anne, who sits at his daily task in the vestibule, while the documents are doled out to him through the jealously guarded door.

If the reader desires a fuller comprehension of these matters, he may ransack the collections of Hearne, another Queen Anne scholar; and he may ascend with some pains to the society of the Elizabethan and Jacobin antiquaries, Agard, Camden, Cotton, Selden, Spelman, Stow, Parker, and others. Conservative and timid as these men mostly were, they could not pursue their studies without being aware of great falsehoods in the literary tradition. Yet so severe was the pressure of ecclesiastical tyranny, they were unable to reveal much important truth to the world. Their studies were invaded, their persons imprisoned, their meetings broken up, all independence of thought discouraged, and the ecclesiastical interest rooted itself the more firmly in protected fiction. Never will the Englishman understand how there comes to be so great a mystery enveloping the noblest names in his literature, until he has entered the study of Selden, and conversed with him and the friends who were worthy to partake his intimacy.

As an example of the absurdity of the tales told us

concerning Records and Reports, it is said that in the fifteenth year of James I. two stipendiary Reporters of Law were appointed at the instance of Bacon, but "nothing came of it." From the time of Henry VIII., it is said, such Reports as existed had been drawn up by private hands. Yet Sir E. Coke, it appears, could believe that in the barbarous times *before* Henry VIII. Reports had been taken by protonotaries at the expense of the Crown; and that Year Books in a regular series were extant from the time of Edward II. to Henry VIII.! Prynne made a partial attack on the Institutes of Coke; but the subject will not be understood till it is remembered *who* were the first *jurisperites* in England, and who started the theory of the English Justinian.

I would here call attention to a passage from Macaulay which illustrates in the clearest manner the passions which led to much fabrication in the "Records." "Every source of information as to our early history (says Macaulay) has been poisoned by party spirit. Our statesmen have always been under the influence of the past, and our historians have always been under the influence of the present. They have regarded History as a repository of title-deeds, on which the rights of Governments and nations depend. Under such conditions the motives to falsification become almost irresistible." Macaulay goes on to point out that down to our own time the precedents from the Middle Ages have been held valid, and have been cited on the gravest occasions by our most eminent statesmen. Those who have written concerning the limits of prerogative and liberty in England have generally shown the temper, not of judges, but of angry and uncandid advocates. They were discussing not a speculative

matter, but a matter which had a direct and practical connection with the most momentous and exciting disputes of their own day. From the commencement of the long contest between the Parliament and the Stuarts down to the time when the pretensions of the Stuarts ceased to be formidable, few questions were practically more important than the question whether the administration of that family had or had not been in accordance with the ancient constitution of the kingdom. The question could only be decided by reference to the Records of preceding reigns. Bracton and Fleta, the Mirror of Justice and the Rolls of Parliament were ransacked to find pretexts for the excesses of the Star Chamber on one side and of the High Court of Justice on the other. During a long course of years every Whig historian was anxious to prove that the old English Government was all but republican, every Tory historian to prove that it was all but despotic.

“With such feelings both parties looked into the Chronicles of the Middle Ages. Both readily found what they sought, and both obstinately refused to see anything but what they sought. . . . Those who saw only one half of the evidence would have concluded that the Plantagenets were as absolute as the Sultan of Turkey; those who saw only the other half would have concluded that the Plantagenets had as little real power as the Doge of Venice, and both conclusions would have been equally remote from the truth.”

Now, it is evident that when there existed so strong a craving for precedents, the temptation would be irresistible to create them in this or that interest. In fact, as I have pointed out, this was a leading motive in the invention of the whole history of our kings; and the literary Churchmen have endeavoured to conciliate

opposing interests in their retrospect. There is no difficulty in finding examples of this method of writing down precedents in story form and calling them fact,—so concealing violence with all the adornments of imaginary antiquity. Let us note how this was done in support of the pretensions of the Tudor monarchy.

Francis Bacon, if he it was who wrote the "Life of Henry VII.," under the patronage of James I. and his son, shows in this treatise none of the qualities of the sound reasoner, merely those of the courtly advocate. He admits that Henry Tudor is now "far off and in a dim light"—a part of ancient History. He has discovered no genuine Records; Henry is but the representative of an idea—the Union of the Roses, and the Union of the Kingdoms. What was the title of Henry to the Crown? In the first place, there was the title of the lady, Elizabeth of York, whom he had promised to marry. Therefore Elizabeth was the true heiress to the Crown. Second, Henry was heir of the House of Lancaster. How so? He claimed descent from John of Ghent, fourth son of Edward III.—in other words, the usurping branch of the family established by the sword of Henry IV. But John of Ghent's line had been broken by the accession of Edward IV. and Richard III. of the York branch. The three Henries had been declared usurpers. Moreover, Henry Tudor claimed descent from the usurping line through the illegitimate Earl of Somerset. He knew (says Bacon) that his Lancastrian title was condemned by Parliament, and yet resolved to rest upon it in the main. Was there ever such a tissue of contradictions? The title amounts to this: He was a usurper and no genuine member of the Royal Family of Edward; but there had been usurpers before him. Then this must be eked out or remedied by the

title of the Sword, which Henry is said to have preferred. He then (says Bacon) obtains from Parliament a Statute entailing the Crown in his family. Finally, this is confirmed by a Papal Bull. So the wreath of three Titles is made a wreath of five. They are, after all, naught but the ornaments and disguises of the Lancastrian sword. And these inventions are of late date.

Coke, the Oracle of Law, says that Elizabeth of York was rightful successor to the Crown after the death of Richard III., for she was eldest daughter of Edward IV. and heiress of "the Conqueror." The only good title that Henry had was as husband of that princess. And as for the Act in Henry's favour, it was *never printed in the Statute Books*. In other words, the Statute was an invention, probably of the late sixteenth century. Men who were capable of such devices were capable of anything. Bacon talks of Records in which there was any memory of the king's attainder being "defaced, cancelled, and taken off the file." Deeds like that were being done in his day, and his fancy transfers them to the ancient time.

It must not be forgotten that Bacon's master, James Stuart, was made to derive his title from the rotten title of Henry Tudor, through his daughter Margaret wedded to the King of Scotland. By the system of imaginary precedents, the lawyers went back to Saxon times and descried an earlier Margaret, daughter of an earlier Edward, the Outlaw, who had wedded Malcolm of Scotland, ancestor of the extant royal line of Scotland. So James Stuart was traced even to Egbert in these elegant constructions which so amused our ancestors.

But sharply Hallam denies that James was a

legitimate sovereign, or had anything but the good will of the people to rest upon, the title which his flatterers affected to disdain. It is clear that in the reign of James men were still inventing English History, or grafting new fictions upon the old stock. The "excellent laws" of that barbarous first Tudor reign and the Star Chamber, "one of the sagest and noblest institutions of the kingdom," are duly referred to by Bacon. What can we think of "the Constitution" when he talks of Henry "remunerating" his people with good laws in return for their money contributions? He discovers the origin of the Statute of Fines in Henry's reign, and traces it back to some imaginary "ancient statute." Hume and Hallam have both criticised Bacon as if he had been careless in many of his statements, which they contradict from spurious evidence that is probably of later origin than Bacon's own time. It does not appear that the Star Chamber was described by any contemporary till the reign of Elizabeth. Had Hallam, with all his good will to the truth, looked closely into the question of the Records, he would have given to these matters a more satisfactory treatment.

Hallam went to the documents with a sincere desire to discover traces of the rise of English Liberty ignored by Hume. But Hallam was foiled. How could so violent and illegal a government as that of the Tudors be maintained? What had become of the old English spirit of the days of King John or Richard II.? Why this retrogression toward absolute monarchy during the period of the Revival of Culture? How could the Tudor princes intimidate if they had no military force wherewith to effectually put down repeated popular insurrections? Hallam thinks it must have been the nobles and clergy who upheld the tyranny, and there would have

been all the greater force in his argument if Hallam had known that the fine talk about Common Laws and Great Charters was not in the air until the time when the tyranny was becoming insupportable, and civil war most fierce and bitter was in view. The immense gulf which appears to yawn between the Magna Carta and the Petition of Right is purely illusory. They are documents of one great period of struggle on the part of the people to obtain the elementary rights of civil existence in the face of a cruel and rapacious oligarchy.

I would call attention to the opinion of Mr. Reeves in his "History of Common Law," that "the order of statutes on which legal opinions may be founded with certainty" begins only with the reign of Henry VII. —a most moderate opinion, as I have already shown. The inconsistencies and absurdities of the current story respecting the Great Charter have been noted by Sir J. F. Stephen and others. When once it is seen that the "Bible of our Constitution" or the Palladium of our Liberties is in fact an elaboration of the sixteenth century, it will then be interesting to inquire what class of men were responsible for its elaboration and publication, how far they were true English patriots, and why it was that the Charter remained practically a dead letter until the time of the Petition of Right.

I need not enlarge on this subject. The necessity of keeping Archives was not felt in any city of the West until about the middle of the sixteenth century, and a great part of the early entries consists merely of fictions in support of a Scheme of History already laid down. I know that the reader who has not looked closely into these matters may find it hard to believe that systematic falsehood was practised in the interest

of ecclesiastical parties so long and so vehemently. But I would ask him, has he studied the political and ecclesiastical life of our own times? Things have mended with us; there are improvements in taste; there are greater checks upon mendacity; audacious fables do not thrive as they once did; yet by the arts of emphasis and suppression a vast amount of falsehood is daily circulated in our world.

Let me here recall a voice—the voice of one whom we believe to have been a man of truly lofty character—from the great critical time of 200 years ago. The words of good Richard Baxter on the study of History contain, in fact, one of the most awful censures on a great mass of writing that had been produced during the preceding 200 years.

Richard Baxter, in his “Narrative of Memorable Passages,” published 1696, says that in his old age he has become very cautious in his belief of History. There were two sorts of men who had written History—ungodly men and party men. You may sooner believe an honest heathen without theological bias than a debauched Christian. Not only is he alien from the spirit of his religion, but he is under the bias of faction. There is no believing the word or the oath of the man who is at once ungodly, ambitious, and factious. Baxter goes on to denounce “the prodigious lies” which have been published in his age for matters of fact, and that with the most unblushing effrontery in the face of thousands of eye and ear witnesses who know all to be false. Reporters had been privileged by power and violence. None dared to answer them or detect their frauds. If they did, their writings were suppressed. Great men had written History or had employed flatterers to do it. Do not

Richard
Baxter on
the study of
History.

believe more than you are constrained to believe, he urges, because you cannot get at the truth "unless men are at liberty to examine and contradict one another."

Baxter denounces indiscriminately the lies of Catholics, Lutherans, Zwinglians, Calvinists, as malicious and impudent; yet they are believed by the multitude of their seduced ones. The same practice had gone on in the writer's day. There had been vehement, iterated, unblushing persistence in falsehoods, generated of hatred on the part of writers who knew that witnesses even of their own party contradicted them. Baxter concludes by saying that he himself expects no more credit for the story of his own life than the "self-evidencing light of the matter" shall constrain, supposing the reader to know nothing of Baxter's character for himself. But where shall we find an Englishman of the sixteenth or seventeenth century who corresponded to Baxter's ideal of the historian—a man who knew what he was writing about, was honest and conscientious, was free from ill will, personal interest, or faction?

Bishop Burnet was writing about the same time his "History of His Own Times," which was not published till some forty years after his death, and then bitterly assailed, as inspired by a spirit of hatred and revenge. A distinguished member of the Benedictine Order, Cardinal Angelo Maria Quirinus, came to London about 1711, called on Burnet, and drew from Burnet the admission that he had been aided by others in his "History of the Reformation." The Cardinal says that he reproached Burnet with his partiality as a historian, and actually succeeded in drawing a slight blush to his cheek. These things should be borne in mind whenever we are referred for information about the state of affairs

in the Tudor time to the collection of a clergyman who lived and wrought in London at the epoch when the fast-flowing tide of party fable had risen to its height, and deposited its miscellaneous *flotsam* and *jetsam* on the shores of modern times.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BIBLE IN ENGLAND.

LET me briefly point out that the immense influence which has been exerted by the Scriptures of the Hebrews upon our imagination is due to the fact that they were introduced at the beginning of our culture, at the same time with the Classics ; but that, unlike the Classics, a mystical authority was given to the Scriptures, the whole weight of the Church organization was thrown into their defence, and they became part of that Anniversary Religion which the Church established, partly on Jewish and Moslem precedent, partly on the ruins of old Roman religion. The New Testament has never been properly studied, either in our schools or in private. But it rooted itself in men's imagination in a twofold way. It told the external story of the Church's rise in a plausible manner ; and it told at the same time the mystical story of our inner life from year to year. Here are no "solar myths ;" but the annual course of the sun, as in other religions, serves to illustrate the course of that mystical life from our baptism to our death and resurrection.

The Jewish Chronology needs revision. I have, perhaps, leaned too heavily in other writings upon what the Jewish scholars of the Revival said of their epochal Maimonides. The question is, whether those statements

rest on authentic Records, or upon vague retrospective system. If the latter, it will be the future task of Jewish scholarship to endeavour to ascertain more closely how old were the oldest Hebrew writings at the epoch of the Revival.

Meantime, it is quite clear that the Hebrew Scriptures could have been known to very few persons outside the synagogues before the erection of the printing presses. In other words, the Bible became known to a very small reading world about 400 years ago. It is important to point out that for the earlier fifteenth century we have no epochal name in the Jewish more than in the Gentile world. But the year 1484 is said to be illustrated by the name of Don Isaac Abarbanel, as Finance Minister of Spain. It appears that about this time there was a great flux of Jewish scholars to the centre of learned attraction in Italy. The entire Hebrew Bible is said to have been first printed at Soncino, near Cremona, about the year 1486. A few years later the Targummum, or Commentaries, so important for the true understanding of the Bible, began to appear. Not until 1520 was the Talmud printed at Venice, which contains some few and confused references to the Christian dogma. It was the time of Pfefferkorn and of Reuchlin, the time when the Jewish scholars show themselves aware of the attacks made upon their people in literature, and are tempted to some retaliation. But the Jewish scholars were not much versed in the little Christian literature that existed; while the notion of any fair and open controversy as to the true meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures never entered the minds of the various literary factions.

When the question is once clearly understood, it will be seen that the earliest period at which critical inquiry

into the origin and antiquity of the Hebrew literature should begin is the Revival of Letters. Without prejudging any point, it will, I believe, be found difficult, if not impossible, to refer the origin of the literature, by any certain chain of witnesses, to a very remote time. That a correct canonical text of the Hebrew Scriptures had been preserved among the Rabbis for a very long period is quite improbable, when we consider the confusion and embarrassment on the subject shown in the Talmudic authorities, the admitted lateness of the vowel points, and other matters. On these questions we may expect much light in future from the candour and stricter scrutiny of modern Jewish scholars. Such light was not to be expected from the men of the Revival, immersed as they were, like the Moslems, in dreamy lore, suffering, moreover, from a terrible devastation of their culture, which may have destroyed many an authentic link with the past.

The fact remains, that to this day the meaning and the worth of the Hebrew Bible has never been discovered. If, dismissing all our inherited prejudices, we sit down to study the book by the mere aid of the Lexicon, we discover at once the existence of great illusions. It has been a great sin against good taste even to treat the books as if they contained definite geographical, ethnographical, or chronological information. The proper names, from the first ideal Parents of the Race and the "Garden of Pleasure" (Eden) in which they dwelt, and from which they were expelled through the whole retrospective scheme, are in the great mass symbolical and allegorical of general ideas and relations. A great fund of interest is opened up so soon as we understand the poetical structure and forms of thought, and arrive at the simple substance of Jewish thought and passion.

There is a great variety of opinion revealed, which is due to the differences among the Jewish clergy themselves, a foreshadowing of corresponding differences to be revealed in the bosom of the Catholic Church. What we habitually consider to be the faults of the Jewish people, and what we should regard as their shining excellences: all are mirrored from early pages of the Bible onward. There is but one way to read the book, and that the right way, which we have yet to discover. We should compare this national lore with that of the Greeks and the Arabians more accurately than has hitherto been done.

We should take back the Hebrew Scriptures to the Synagogues, and in the synagogues we should study them, listening to that soul-moving music which bears the imagination by the swiftest and surest clue through all the story of the past. Our antipathies will thus melt into sympathies, and we shall be doing something to repair old errors, and bring about a better civility and culture. Esau and Jacob may learn from one another, and the old jealousy and hostility may gradually abate. For the last 400 years the Jews and their writings have been thrust into an absurd position; and, since all absurdity in thought reflects some corresponding barbarity in life, it is the interest of both Gentile and Jew that common-sense views should prevail in reference to all literary works of art.

With regard to the Latin Bible or Bibles, I do not enter upon the details to be found in so many compilations. The essential point in the study has been missed, which is to recognize the extreme paucity of any Latin texts at the end of the fifteenth century throughout the Christian—that is, the Monastic—world. The Latin Bible was a new book at the beginning of

the next age; with a mysterious—that is, a concealed—history behind it, it was impossible that it should not be misunderstood. All the figures of speech—“Revelation,” “Inspiration,” “Word of God,” and the like—which have so long bewildered weak thinkers, are of ecclesiastical origin; and were never designed to elucidate anything. The sole important question is, what were the literary men of the monasteries doing in the time that preceded the publication of the edition of Ximenes? You cannot attentively peruse the story of that edition without perceiving how densely falls the curtain in front of the Scriptoria at the epoch to which I have so often referred.

The Latin New Testament is the earlier. The designation is of Benedictine origin; nor can the reader find a better guide to the structure of the book than the tract of the Benedictine of Bury to be found in Bishop Tanner’s “Bibliotheca.” It is the book of the Latin Christians—that is, of the Monks of the West; but it is open to question whether in our sixteenth-century editions, the hands of other than members of the primitive Order may not be detected. Let me, however, point out that, Dogma apart, the structure of the book has been, during these ages, entirely misunderstood.

1. The monk derives his information from brethren of his Order writing, as I have shown, under feigned names during the Revival: from “Burcard of Worms, Hugo of St. Victor, Vincentius, Gratian, Isidore, Cassiodore.” He is *au courant* with the tale of the old anonymous Vulgar version, and the preferred version of “Jerome.” He has the fable of the Seventy Greek translators, the versions of Aquila and others—indications which

“Boston of Bury” on the Bible.

unerringly point to the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century.

2. He is a witness to the fact that the books of the New Law have been written on a system of correspondence with the Old ; that they are not books of Record, but works of mystical art. The four Volumes of the Gospels correspond to the four symbolical beasts of Ezekiel. He explains the "Ammonian Canons," which again reveal the artifice of the structure. He rests on that famous Catalogue to which I have so often referred — "Jerome on Illustrious Men;" but at present it is known as "On Catholic Writers."

3. In a second rank are Four Volumes : the Epistles of Paul, the Seven Canonical Epistles, the Acts of the Apostles, the Apocalypse.

4. In a third rank the monk enumerates as parts of the New Law : (1) the Decretals from the imaginary Constantine ; the Four Councils of Nicæa, of Constantinople, of Ephesus, of Chalcedon, with the Heresies condemned in them ; (2) the writings of Holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church, viz. the Benedictine faction under the guise of Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory, Basil, Origen, Isidore, Bede, and other Orthodox.

5. On the system of Correspondence, he shows that to the *Legal books* of the Old Covenant answer the *Evangelists* of the New ; to the *Prophetical books*, the *Apostles* ; to the *Agiographi*, the *Doctors of Decrees* and the *Originalia*. To the *Historical books* of the Old Testament answer the *Acts of the Apostles*, the *Epistle of James*, the *Epistle of Peter*, the *Epistles of John*, the *Epistle of Jude*. To the *Sapiential books* of the Old Testament answer the other eleven *Epistles* ; and the *Apocalypse* to the *Prophetical books* of the Old Testament.

We find here the tale of Pamphilus and his wondrous Library; also a list of the *Apocryphal* or secret volumes which reveal to the initiated the connection which exists between the Gospels and the Arabian tradition of the Koran.

This production cannot, as I have said, be referred with probability to an earlier period than 1480-1520. The student who follows out its indications with rigorous scrutiny will find himself on the way to discover all that can be known concerning the origin of the Latin Bible in the cloister of Corbéy, of St. Germain, St. Gall, Bobbio; of Lindisfarne, Hereford, and the other seats of the great monastic literary activity.

The elaborate fable of "St. Jerome" and his contemporaries will be properly understood when read as allegorical of sixteenth-century relations; as Dr. Westcott, the late Bishop of Durham, has remarked, the supposed saint writes like a sixteenth-century scholar. Numberless allusions there are in these Hieronyman writings which may be regarded as of genuine historical value, so soon as they are placed in the light of the beginning Biblical time. You detect the Machiavellian policy of the Churchmen, the supercilious contempt of the folly and credulity of the world. But I must content myself with pointing out where a considerable mine of material lies, for the illustration of early Biblical study with the assistance of "Barabbases" from the Jewish community, as the monks call the Hebrew scholars.

The study of the Greek versions is a purely sixteenth and seventeenth century study, from the Complutensian or Alcalá edition of 1522, where the Greek and the Hebrew are treated as "thieves," one on either side of

the Latin, the editions of Erasmus, Aldus, Stephens, Beza. The study of the particulars shows how young the study of Greek was, how inveterate the habit of fiction in all relating to the publication of books. Not until 1633 is the announcement made to the world in connection with the Elzevir edition of Leyden, that there was a text "universally received."

How melancholy has been the study of scholarship in England in this relation! Strange spell by which the energies of our best men have been benumbed, so that they have been disabled from telling a few plain truths to the world! Or, unhappy profession which admits not of the truth as it stands in Letters being told!

John Mill, Canon of Canterbury, published in 1707 his edition of the New Testament, based on that of Stephens' of 1550, with various readings ^{John Mill.} that had come into existence since that date. The ecclesiastical interest took alarm.

Whitby, who was a simple man, came forward to complain of these various readings, and to impugn the literary character of Mill, because ^{Whitby.} he had thrown doubt upon the plain rule of faith and practice of the English Church. Whitby could not endure the thought that the New Testament should have been interpolated from the very beginning, and that since Stephens' time the uncertainty about the text should have so greatly increased. In spite of himself, Whitby, in discussing the matter, blurts out the truth concerning these variant readings. "They must have been inserted," he says, "by a 'confederacy' of those who had the custody of the Christian archives." His remarks are undesignedly an excellent critique upon the system of the Benedictines (1706).

Some years later, Richard Bentley, who had given

strong proof of his critical acumen in dealing with the forged Epistles of Phalaris, stepped into the arena of controversy. He was a man superior in sense and in courage to Whitby. He said that it was not poor Mill's fault if he found the various readings; he did not coin them. "Depend on it," says Bentley, "no matter of fact laid fairly open can ever subvert true religion. You must admit the 30,000 various readings, and more if necessary. If," continues Bentley, "there had been but *one* Greek MS. at the Revival of Learning, you would have had no various readings, but the suspicions of fraud and foul play would have been immensely greater in the best copies of it. You have more anchors than one." So would Bentley calm the men who were affrighted at a "scarecrow," as he says.

Bentley showed that Whitby did not understand his subject. The present text had been "settled," as he says, by Robert Stephens, whereas Whitby is dreaming of some Sacred Original in every word and syllable. If this goes on, adds Bentley, Stephens will soon be regarded as infallible, like an Apostle or an Evangelist. You must remember that the Originals had been long lost, says Bentley. In his "Proposals" for printing a new edition of the Greek Testament he further pointed out that the MSS. of the old Vulgar Latin and of the Greek used by the first editors were of no great antiquity; and yet he could believe that in the course of 200 years, older MSS. in Roman and Greek uncials had been discovered. He thought he had some twenty of them. The discovery was noised abroad, but in fact it was the discovery of a mare's nest. Bentley, misled by the talk of the Benedictines about their Jerome and their Origen, compared the oldest copies of the Greek with Jerome's

Latin—none of them, perhaps, older than the sixteenth century—and believed that he could thus discover the Original, and lead the world out of the labyrinth of the 30,000 readings. He had the ambition to present to the whole Christian Church a *κτῆμα ἐς αἰετ*, a spiritual Magna Carta (1721).

But an untimely frost nipped these hopes in the bud. Conyers Middleton came forward to defend Cardinal Ximenes' edition and those of Erasmus and Stephens; while he impugned the credit of Bentley's twenty MSS. Bentley withdrew his design, and spent the remainder of his days with the Latin and English poets. Middleton later denied the "inspiration" of the Evangelists, and treated them as inventors.

About the time of the "Proposals," Father Hardouin was writing in Paris in passionate defence of the old Vulgate. He maintained, and justly, ^{Opinion of Hardouin.} that the Greek MSS. were really younger, although it was pretended they were much older. The old Vulgate was once in the hands of all the Orders. It could not be corrupted; therefore the forgers applied their attention to the stealthy corruption of texts—Latin, Greek, and Hebrew—which were to be produced in due time for polemical purposes. They invented various readings in Greek copies, so as to produce the impression that the Latin had suffered in a similar way. "And now," continued the indignant priest, "any scoundrel or liar may invent various readings, as they call them. If I at this day desired to forge a Greek MS. and send various readings to Oxford for the new edition, I should cry up my copy with great pomp of words; I should get my readings admitted, and they would be in esteem first with a few, then with many. Everybody has the Vulgate, therefore I cannot injure it. It is only the

learned who read the Greek MSS., and it is believed that they have not yet all been extracted from the libraries."

When one of the Benedictine Fathers of St. Maur objected to Hardouin that this kind of reasoning might lead to doubts about the Vulgate itself, Hardouin retorted in effect: "You mean to say that your diplomata and the Vulgate stand on the same footing. If we deny the antiquity of the former, we at the same time deny the antiquity of the Vulgate. No; we deny indeed the genuineness of your 'Fathers' and of your charters. But we denounce as a madman or an impious person him who declares that the Vulgate cannot be proved to be older. Why? *Because of the testimony of the Roman and of the universal Church, which declares that the Vulgate is older than any other writing.*"

But it was no question of testimony: and if the Benedictine was in the right, the Vulgate cannot be conceived as more ancient than the Order itself.

Everything that relates to Tyndale must be received with great caution, seeing that our sources of knowledge are tainted with the spirit of partisanship and malevolence. Foxe is little worthy of credit; and if we take away the essays of Genealogists, who imagined an antiquity for the name of Tyndale, little remains but a vague rumour lingering about certain haunts of the English Reformers. Tyndale bears the *alias* of Hitchens.

Hall, the Chronicler, has some indistinct memory or conception of a virtuous youth at St. Mary Magdalen, Oxford; and Foxe confirms the impression. Then the latter has a glimpse of the same young man as tutor in the family of Sir John Welch in Gloucestershire, and preacher in the neighbourhood of Bristol. The house

The Bible
in English.
W. Tyndale.

of the knight is remembered as the resort of abbots and other Church dignitaries, for whom the young man proved more than a match in theological argument. The Oxford scholar, having imbibed the spirit of the religious awakening, looked with contempt upon the poor monks, who knew naught but Missal and Breviary, if even those. The place becomes too hot for him, and he repairs to London, ingratiates himself with Erasmus, with Bishop Tonstall, and Sir Henry Guildford, a friend of Sir John Welch. Disappointed of preferment in these high quarters, our scholar finds shelter with Alderman Humphrey Monmouth, a Lutheran, and a member of the Drapers' Company. The great excitement produced by the apostasy of the German monk caused an intense curiosity to know what was really in the New Testament. Tyndale's name is representative of the movement in favour of a translation; and the rest may be understood as the story of the enterprise, told in the manner alone suitable to popular taste, as that of a heroic scholar and a martyr.

The English colony of merchants at Antwerp are brought into this story, as they are brought into the story of Thomas Cromwell. They are said to have been Lutherans, probably in correspondence with the Drapers of London, and patrons of their *protégé*, who was no doubt one of a company of collaborating scholars, two of whose names are given. The tale runs that 1500 copies of the New Testament were printed about 1526 or 1527. Yet it is doubtful whether one or more than one copy of this first edition has ever been discovered. The Dutchmen continued to print the book with many errors; till in 1534 George Joy, a Peterhouse man, was employed to correct the press. The jealousy of Tyndale was aroused, and he

assailed Joy in the abusive style that was conventional in those days. And Joy retorted in similar strain. The business appears to have been a profitable one for the times.

Now, it is not in the least probable that the secular oligarchy in England dreaded the effect upon the minds of the people of a book they could little understand. The priesthood saw that the flag of defiance was hoisted. They were conscious that the Latin book was part of a mystical and sacerdotal system. To translate it into the vernacular was equivalent to a profanation of their mysteries, a determination to drag into the light of common day the arcana of a profession. They insinuated in the minds of the temporal lords that the book would promote rebellion; and if the tale in Foxe and the record of the Council in Wilkins' Collection be genuine, they resolved to have the book publicly burned, and carried out their resolve at Paul's Cross. As the tale runs, Tyndale rejoiced at the folly of the clergy, who were putting money into his pocket by increasing the demand for the book.

Then an inquisition for copies began, and Humphrey Monmouth is supposed to have been imprisoned in the Tower and almost ruined. And then, since violence would not avail, ridicule must be tried. A Dialogue was put forth under the name of Sir Thomas More wherein the book was denounced as Tyndale's or Luther's, rather than the true New Testament. Later, the Star Chamber proclaims the book. The conduct of the clergy is denounced in Tyndale's preface to "Jonas" as that of fleshly minded hypocrites, who treat the Scriptures as their own property and merchandise and monopoly, and will neither use the Word of God nor suffer others to enjoy it. It was the interests of a

profession and the interests of popular liberty which were at stake in this quarrel. The book is the mere pretext.

With regard to the fate of Tyndale, no confidence can be placed in the tales of Foxe, who has an insatiable greed for Protestant martyrological material. He says that after Tyndale's sojourn at Hamburgh with Coverdale he returned to Antwerp under the protection of Pointz, the English merchant. Then an emissary is sent from the English court to play the spy upon Tyndale and Pointz. The translator is imprisoned at Vilvorden for a year and a half. Pointz is subject to a false accusation, is also imprisoned, but escapes. The English merchants, with their old friend Cromwell, vainly intercede with the Imperial Court at Brussels on behalf of Tyndale. He is condemned at Augsburg by an Imperial decree, and executed in 1536.

His Fate.

When it is remembered that these tales were written down some quarter of a century after that date by a man reckless of veracity and unchecked by the fear of confutation from Public Records, we may well suspend our belief in them as they stand. Miles Coverdale, the translator of the Bible and the coadjutor of Tyndale, is said to have died at a good old age in London, leaving behind him no very distinct impression, and no memorials of his connection with the Magdalen scholar. The truth is that in the tale of Foxe, as in other tales of his "Golden Legend," as the Catholics ironically called it, you may recognize many autobiographical reflections. Foxe was also of Magdalen, Foxe lived as tutor in powerful families, Foxe went in exile to Antwerp and Frankfurt, Foxe knew the passions of the exiles under Queen

The dubious authority of "Foxe."

Mary, and wrote for the pleasure of the Puritans under Queen Elizabeth. So much we gather from the life by his son, published in 1641.

The reader is convinced that there has been gross invention and exaggeration of details in the tales of Foxe when he turns back to Polydore, and finds complete silence respecting this event of the translation of the New Testament into English. And yet Polydore was still living about ten years before these tales began to be written down; and had dismissed the subject of Henry VIII.'s innovations in religion in a single paragraph, where he praises the consistency of Cardinal Fisher and Sir Thomas More. Who can peruse the lineaments of More—the gentlest and humanest face that looks out from the canvases of the Tudor period, and willingly believe that he wrote the virulent abuse ascribed to him against Tyndale? Writing under the date 1530, Polydore says that both More and Fisher preferred to depart from life than from their principles, that they might the more quickly enjoy eternity in the heaven to which they aspired. The new hypocrisy which was to vie with the old hypocrisy of the monks began to show its repulsive forms in the time after that where Polydore enters his last date, 1538. .

After all the fulsome talk of love of the people and love of knowledge in connection with the introduction of the English Bible, it is impossible to look with complacency on the conduct of the men who were responsible for the work, or upon the subsequent event of its introduction. Greed of gain, ambition, party spirit, a desire by fair means or foul to get the better of their opponents, is manifest everywhere on the part of those who desired to wrest the Scriptures from the hands of the Roman

Evil Results
of the
Enterprise.

priesthood, and put them in the hands of the vulgar. Nowhere is there the slightest sign of a disposition to inquire into the origin and proper interpretation of the book. There were, indeed, perhaps no critics capable of imagining that the book was not of remote origin. But as to its immediate origin, they knew very well it had come from the monasteries, that it was monastic in spirit and originally Petrine, Pontifical in its teaching. They knew that its pages could never justify Henry VIII. in thrusting himself into the Apostolical Succession, or his son in replacing the Missal by a new Liturgy. They repeated the sin of the abbots, when the abbots laid hands on the Hebrew Scriptures, and made them utter false voices.

The ethics of the New Testament, quietist and subservient as they are to authority, did not suit those angry times, and became a dead letter; while in the unintelligible Pauline logic and polemic, and in the fierce invectives of the Old Testament, all classes found fuel to feed the flames of their political and ecclesiastical zeal. It is easy to imagine, had there been any strong and sincere desire to bless the people with good books that should come home to their bosoms and their business, how the scholars of Oxford and Cambridge could have combined for the work. They might have made the best wisdom of antiquity and of their own time current coin and familiar as household words. But their desire was to establish ecclesiastical organization at the expense of the people; and the people have suffered sorely from their selfishness and neglect. Whose fault is it if at the present day a great mass of English people still prefer an exotic literature which they cannot comprehend to the homely wisdom distilled in the pages of our English poets? The people are ignorant

that the English heart and brain have created a literature which ought to be, and actually is, far higher in worth to us than the sacred books of the Arabians, the Jews, or the Monks. Regrets on this subject may be idle, but they are impossible to restrain.

If we trust an Act assigned to the year 1542, the Scriptures had hardly been made known in our mother tongue before a prohibition was issued against their use by all but gentlemen and merchants. And they were only to read "quietly and with good order." In short, the Scriptures were to be read, but only that arguments in favour of the institutions which the Oligarchy were trying to set up might be found in them. Under such conditions reading became a solemn farce. And from that time onwards the history of the Bible and its interpretation in England has been a melancholy story of absurdity and confusion.

Learned men did not address themselves to the serious study of the Oriental peoples. They had no encouragement to the task. A bright exception may be noted, a century later, in the case of Prideaux and of Pococke. The latter travelled to the East, enjoyed the friendship of learned Moslems, and delighted himself in the riches of the Arabian literature. His story is pathetic; he and his learning were rudely despised by the fanatics who claimed possession of "the Spirit" which made them independent of the resources of human learning. Ignorance under the guise of erudition may perhaps be said to have culminated after the Restoration in the work of Thomas Gale, "The Court of the Gentiles," in which the attempt is made to prove that Hebrew is the mother-tongue of the world, and the Jewish

The Act of
1542.

Ignorance of
Oriental
matters.

Church the source of all philosophy. Enlightened scholars at the present day, in a city which possesses more Oriental literary treasures than any other in the world, have still to wrestle with these ridiculous superstitions.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NEW TESTAMENT IN THE LIGHT OF THE REVIVAL.

THE New Testament books, then, become for the first time of vital interest when we read them in the light of the Revival and the Schisms of the Church, during about the period 1480-1520. For both the Jewish and the Classical writings have been employed in the construction of the books.

Illustrations
of the state
of Thought
among the
Orders.

The Christ of the Gospels is from the first the creation of the consciousness of the Catholic Church, or, more precisely, of the literary men who were founding a third great Book-religion in Europe. Because the Church claimed to be Catholic, she must represent in her New Law and Prophets the various sects and opinions which obtained within her gates at the eve of the Reformation. Hence it is insisted upon that, amidst the many gods and lords recognized in the world, the Church must assent to *one* God the Father, and *one* Lord Jesus Christ. To this Christ the Jewish Messiah must give way. A schism on this subject, a *divided* Christ, can no more be admitted. Contention is going on in reference to this supreme subject, yet the good Catholic editors rejoice that in any way "Christ is preached," because this common enthusiasm is the mainspring of Church

The Christo-
logical
conception.

activity and success. Though some speak of the "Man Christ Jesus," others of "Christ as God," it signifies little so long as the people are thrown upon the great ecclesiastical corporation for guidance. She will launch the great sentence, *Verbum Caro factum est*, and condense its meaning in the Sacrament of the Altar.

The Book of Daniel, one of the latest of the Jewish Canon and of the most doubted—probably written in the time of the Abarbanals—was found to be a great source of types of the Christ. Hence he is called "the Son of Man." The mystical and awful representations of the Coming One were suitable to be read and listened to and discoursed upon at each anniversary Advent. A severe, a wrathful Christ, clement to the lowly, but implacable towards obstinate dissenters from the Church, is among the earliest ideals. He has not come to send peace, but a sword. There must be bitter conflicts between theological or ecclesiastical loyalty and the dear instincts of flesh and blood. Men are not worthy of Christ if they are not prepared to hate father and mother for his sake.

The Book of Daniel as a source of Christology.

In absolute *contempt for this world and its joys*, all property must be renounced for the sake of the celibate and militant life; otherwise men are as savourless salt, fit only for the dunghill.

The Renunciation of the World.

The world outside the Cloister is composed of a low and grovelling herd. They are not fit to know anything. They may be deceived by parables, the inner sense of which the faithful only know. Whatever you do or say, you will be misunderstood. The proper attitude toward the multitude is therefore that of watchful craft under the guise of innocence and simplicity.

There is equal jealousy of intelligence in the broader sense. God has hidden Wisdom from the knowing, and has revealed it to the babes and little ones of the monasteries. Weakness and ignorance are glorified and converted into strength by means of organization.

The warfare of the Army of God is directed against the whole nation of the Jews. The Sabbath is a superstition, and the Incarnate God defies it as He passes through the fields, plucking corn on that day. The examples of David and of Elias, taken from their own Scriptures, are turned against them. The Pharisees, the teachers of the Mishna, are a race of vipers shedding their venom upon mankind. How can those foul-hearted men utter anything that is good? Their unresting zeal is the cloke of their insatiable ambition. The most violent figures of speech are exhausted in these fierce invectives. The mere pagans, or those who hold aloof in watchful impartiality, fare scarce better. All who fail to serve the interests of the Christian Empire are to be regarded as enemies of Christ.

The rich and the noble are denounced with no less vehemence if they are guilty of withholding their support from the same interest. The luxuries and splendour of this life must have their sequel in the Inferno. It is indeed doubtful if any rich man can be saved, short of an exercise of the prerogative of Omnipotence. Mere Poverty is a passport to Paradise, and he that expects the least reward of his toil will receive the most. The great Taskmaster will reap where he has not sowed, and gather where he has not strawed. Vain is all talk of common justice where the ethics of such an Empire are concerned. An impression as of some

The War
against the
Jews.

Denuncia-
tion of the
Rich.

The Praise
of Poverty.

fierce host, like that of the Moslems in their conquering days, sweeping through the world, makes itself evident in these representations. The soldiers of Christ advance upon the villages and towns, lamb-like in their aspect, but with desperate courage in their bosoms. They lodge with the reputed worthy; if they are deceived, they quit their lodgment with dire threats and execrations. The word is Forward! Forward! Only he who perseveres to the end in the Holy War will receive the crown. The most striking passages in the New Testament are those which reflect the strongest passions. Such passions were those engendered and stimulated in the life of the missionary monks and friars. But perhaps there was no more actual violence and bloodshed in the towns and hamlets during those operations than there has been in our own time during the progress of similar enthusiasts.

But the Churchmen, in their mystic portraitures, meet the needs of a gentler class of minds. Idyllic scenes. Sweet are many of the idylls of the third Gospel, derived in great part from the Arabians and the Jews. There is the new Joshua, or Jesus, full of grace and of consolation, the fulfiller of beautiful dreams of the most tender-hearted Jewish mystics; a social, not a gloomy and aversive god in human form; one tolerant alike of Pharisees and Samaritans, of prodigals and Magdalens; the revealer of a clement Father in the heavens; the recoverer of the lost; one who could never have excited the antipathy of a religious corporation which laid emphasis on the duties of charity and humanity. But then, again, the theological or metaphysical Christ of the fourth Gospel appears, and the invectives against the teachers of the Mishna and the whole race of the children of Abraham are renewed. The complete study

of the subject in all its details would require a comparison with the kindred art of painting during the Renaissance.

It is an imperfect or suggestive kind of art. Not
 Church Art one of the images of the Christ is fully drawn
 suggestive. and coloured. Haste is apparent with the
 workmanship. There is adumbration rather than illumination. The listener or spectator is left to suppose that much more might have been said or might have been shown. You draw near to the portrait, and find mere spots of colour; you retire a little, and sympathy with the intent of the artist enables you to complete his sketch. The Perfect Man, for whom all hearts long, is at least hinted, and the Virgin Mother. Presently the genius of a Raphael will fling the thought upon canvas. It will be admired, but its very clearness and definiteness will refuse satisfaction to the yearnings of the private mystic of each observer.

In listening to the Church Lessons or sermons we are
 The Perfect more affected than in gazing at the canvas,
 Man. because we have more liberty for our own
 creative fancy. We are moved, we know not well why. But in the critical mood we become aware that the emotion is the result of an immense effort to educate the world by the presentation of this divine human Image, to which we may direct all our secret aspirations to higher things. For this reason, it has been said, the name of Christ links an Ignatius Loyola with a Calvin, a Francis Assisi with a Melancthon, with a Lessing and a Theodore Parker, or with a weeping Magdalen and a child at play. They are looking at different objects, but they give those objects the same designation. Modern Humanists and Stoics may choose to call the being who thinks naught human

alien from himself by the name of Christ, and by the same name the intolerant orthodoxist may denote his ideal of a being who is in possession of exclusive truth. In like manner each lover of St. Paul has his own Paul.

The author from whom I have borrowed in the foregoing paragraph remarks that the pleasure of the intelligent student lies in tracing out how the unique image of Christ arose in fact before the world at a time when religion was associated with art, so that the one supported the other and corrected the other. So intimate, he justly adds, is this connection that not the dialectics of the philosopher, but the truly poetic soul of the pious man is the fountain-head of the best things. The more those soul affections are valued, in the greater esteem will the Catholic image of Christ be held and the like condition of life will recur in which the image first arose.*

Some further illustrations may be given for that collection of Sentences early known as the Pauline Sayings. "Apostle," but from the time of Luther associated with the name, then beginning to be famous in literature, of St. Paul.

In the Epistles, then, you discover the same theory which you find set forth in the first Church History. A new kind of Judaism is supposed to have arisen, which has cast off circumcision and other ceremonies of the Law. The Son of Man is said to have already come to be the Saviour of the human race, and this Advent is yearly commemorated. The Jewish eschatology of the Book of Daniel becomes a Christian Christology, and Michael, Guardian Angel of the Jews, becomes a Protector of the Christian host. In the apocalypse of the Epistles to the Thessalonians the attributes of the Son of Man

* "Verisimilia," Amsterdam, 1887.

have been transferred to Jesus, who is now declared to be the invisible Head of Saintdom, Lord of the faithful, who has died and risen again. There is complete silence on his earthly life and teaching, his Cross and the remission of sins, in early Sentences.

In another Epistle, amidst the strangest confusion of Sentences, violent dissensions are seen to be going on in respect to different and rival Revelations of a great Schism in the Church. Gospels or Revelations and on the question whether justice is by observance of the Mosaic Law or by faith alone. It is claimed on behalf of the new sect or nation that they are the true children of Abraham. They who have been initiated into the Church are a New Creation. There is evidence of halters between two opinions, as in a time of violent revolution. The policy of those who would Judaize or Christianize at the same time is denounced. He who submits to circumcision is bound by the Law, and he who would be a Christian must submit to the scandal of the Cross and crucifixion. It is to be supposed that Martin Luther understood his favourite epistle; and if so, it must have been because its half-expressed thoughts were those of the religious fraternity to which he himself belonged. Only they who have applied the literary microscope to the document are aware of its extraordinary obscurity and incoherence.

In another Apostolic effusion Christ is spoken of, along with Paul, Apollos and Cephas, as if all were human masters, each at the head of a guild of disciples. Then Christ is Head of the Church, or stands symbolically for the Church itself, which cannot be divided, like the seamless vestment. Passages are written to console the weaker sex in their efforts for the martyr's crown, after the type of a St. Agatha. They have a mystic persuasion

of the truth which renders them superior to all the wisdom of the world. There is a strange mixture of affected humility and real arrogance in many of these Apostolic utterances. It is proper to such a state of mind that the Crucifix, which offends a great religious sect, and which is absurd to the taste of the educated, should be fixed on as a victorious sign. There is much talk of Mystery and of the Spirit. The priest in other passages defends himself against the charge of avarice, or indicates the right of taking about a "sister" as an Apostolic practice, and other liberties. He claims to have enjoyed visions of the Lord. The doctrine of expediency is pushed as far as any Jesuit could have pushed it; it enables him to live lawlessly or lawfully, as the occasion demands. The great desire which governs the Apostolic mind is to bring all into the Communion of the Catholic Church.

Hence the diversity of opinions which is openly encouraged on the same questions; whether the priesthood are to "speak in tongues" Diversity of Opinions. unintelligible to the common folk with a view to impress their imagination or not. Order is the thing to be aimed at, and peace. The Church is a body with many members. The Apostolic editor in his love for the Church would promote unanimity with a view, above all, to united action. Order and Unity aimed at. The interest of the Convent is before the private thoughts of any member. The strain after Unity in variety is proper to the Catholic Church from the first. "Clearly it appears in the history of the Canon of the New Testament. In the volume which the Church has consecrated there is place for the cool common sense of James, for the fervour of the Apocalyptic, for the prudence of Paul in the Acts, and the vehemence of

Paul in the Galatians. . . . The volume which comprises such diversities might for that reason satisfy all." *

The singular laudation of "Charity" in a well-known passage can only be understood when it is remembered that this peculiar creation in Ethics belongs entirely to the Cloister, and there alone can flourish. But this matter is more fully explained in the quietist teaching of Cassian, the great moralist of the Order.

It appears that at the time of the edition of the "Apostolic" writings diverse manners and customs obtained in the different cloisters, and correspondingly diverse opinions of what was the status of Women. Now the sexes are said to be on a level; now the woman is said to be inferior to the man. She need not veil, or she ought to veil, her head. Again the desire is manifest to suppress private caprice in the interests of unity. Marriage is alternately disparaged and approved, or conceded as a necessity. The celibate state is superior. Divorce is prohibited on grounds of ecclesiastical expediency.

Amidst the obscurities concerning the Holy Communion, it is plain that there had been two solemnities: the Breaking of the Loaf, as at the Pasch of the Jews in sign of fraternal love, and the other the symbolic use of the Cup as representing the new Paschal Sacrifice of the Church. The latter ceremony, abhorrent to the Jews, may have been derived from the Orphic ceremonies of old Greek cults. There are hints in the "Apologists" that they were well acquainted with such orgies, and there are tales of the intemperance indulged in on the anniversary feasts of martyrs. Justly

* "Verisimilia," p. 67.

it is affirmed that "Transubstantiation is in the New Testament, and that the Roman Church entirely depends on it. Luther would not give up the *Hoc est Corpus meum*. Calvin obstinately retained against Zwingle the spiritual eating of the Body. There is nothing older in the Church than Transubstantiation, even though the dogma was not laid down till the beginning of the thirteenth century, and the Cup not denied to the people before the beginning of the fifteenth."* But attention to the literary sources, all of the Benedictine system, will convince the reader that these statements were not made until the Revival.

The same writer adds: "The dogma is the glory of the Catholic Church. When she taught how mortal man might change divine substance into blood, she satisfied longings which were felt in our world five centuries before our era; but when she substituted bread for wine, she separated herself entirely from the orgies of the Greeks and Romans. This was no accident, because the Church, represented from the beginning by bread, had been changed into the mystical Body of Christ, eminent above the faithful, and comprehending therein. She alone was the bearer of salvation in the same manner in which it was pronounced by the Mystical Head. By one and the same sacrament men are united with the invisible Head and the visible Church."

The value of the work to which I have been referring is greatly increased when you carry its analytic results into the light of the time immediately preceding the Reformation. Passing over for the moment the curious historic allusions in 1 Cor. 16 and elsewhere, I would call attention to a passage where the uneasy conscience of ecclesiastics who

Satires on
the Priest-
hood.

* "Verisimilia," p. 90.

are aiming at exalted repute for piety with the crowd while at bitter variance with one another is reflected. Commenting on the passage about the "Thorn in the Flesh," the critic observes what sacerdotal pride and wrath breaks out amidst boasts of visions and revelations, against the false apostles, the tyrants who devour the patrimonies of the faithful and do violence to the Church. "So he writes, and so sprang up that kind of writing which the Archbishop of the Roman Church will through the course of ages down to our own time faithfully imitate. The exaggeration of the words inevitably weakens their force. Here the sacerdotal mind confounds the honour of the man with the authority of the minister. Educated people ask whether a thing is true, and care not *who* said it. Otherwise in the Church, where the vulgar cling to *proper names*."

Then who is it that writes this strange story in
The Pauline Allegory. 2 Cor. under the mask of "Paul," and with so much of vehemence and passion? How can we reconcile these outbursts of obscure declamation with the reputed statements of the first Church History, that Paul wrote but a very few Sentences? The riddle may be hard to read, yet not be insoluble. The monastic editors who sought the patronage of the Pope for their work must have known their own mind. And this much is clear, that the portrait of an Apostle tossed on the waves of adverse fortune; a humble-seeming man who is forced to apologize for indistinct faults, who in his great tenderness is reluctant to punish the Church, who avoids offences and is anxious for a well-won popularity; a meek spirit who cannot endure the Stoic's self-reliance and contempt of pain;—is traceable only to a thorough Monk, as he is elsewhere clearly revealed in the writings of the Order.

But not to pursue this subject further than the requirements of an Introduction like the present reach, I desire to show merely that the Bible, on which our culture has been said, and justly in a certain sense, to rest, could only have become an instrument of culture in any part of the West during the Revival of Learning. And in particular the New Law, which is essentially the same with the Rule of St. Benet, could only have been committed to letters during that period. The whole process can be sufficiently traced in the monastic writings by which the New Law was gradually enlarged, by which opposing principles in the mystical and the ceremonial life were admitted, by which finally a historical setting was given to the whole. The dogmatic, theological, or mystical element was creative, as may be plainly seen in the Prefaces to the Service Book, to the Church History, to the third and fourth Gospel. Especially the Church History ascribed to Eusebius Pamphili, when compared with the Gospels and the Acts, shows how little progress had been made in this department at the time it began to be read; that is, early in the sixteenth century.

The stories of the origin of the Church did not escape criticism either from the Jews or the Classical scholars. The Jews, themselves little educated, except in mystical dreams, could not disprove those tales, but they well knew them to have been invented in bitter hostility to their race, and were bound to repudiate them. The Greeks—that is, the best-educated men—smiled at these new “Homeric fables,” as they said, but, with one or two honourable exceptions, refrained from openly denouncing them. They took the preferments offered them, and held their peace. The Church was but one of many Corporations, and the most

The Criticism
of Jews and
Greeks.

powerful, which were engaged in inventing a history for themselves. The weaker or the more enthusiastic minds, caring little for antiquity and plunged in reverie, were engaged in discovering the Divine in their own consciousness, or in making "the Apostle" the mouthpiece of their sentiments. So it was that organization triumphed, and the ambitious dream of the Cloisters, by the aid of pictorial and dramatic art, obtained currency in the world as the story of human salvation.

I know that it is hard to dispossess the mind of the long and profound illusion of our education on this subject; still, there are cold hard facts to be detected amidst the legends of the time, the touch of which brings awakening to the least attentive reader. It is said that a young man, who later became the great religious hero of the age, was busy among the books of a scant library or bookshelf in a German town. He was examining the books with a view to discover the names of the authors. He came upon a Latin Bible, which was to him a discovery as of a treasure hid in a field, but which he had not the means to obtain possession of. Not long after he entered a convent of Austin Friars; and is said to have passed through soul-agonies analogous to those set down as autobiographies of St. Paul. His name became linked with that of St. Paul as the promulgator of the dogma of gratuitous justification by faith only. But this theological discovery was of Martin Luther's own time.

The scene at Erfurt is said to have passed about the year 1503. And certainly it is no illusion, but the mere bold fact, that from about the beginning of that age men began to talk of a New Testament; and a little later that intense general curiosity was excited

Luther's discovery of the Bible.

and the desire felt to have these writings rendered into the vernacular tongues. The reader may find further illustrations of the religious conditions under which the New Law was produced in the Benedictine who wrote and began to find readers in the sixteenth century under the mask of Matthew Paris.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MONASTERIES AND THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE importance of the subject is so great, that at the risk of being tedious, I will dwell a little longer on the proofs that the *Gospels* and the *Apostle* were still in course of growth during the early sixteenth century. In them we see mirrored the enthusiasm which was essentially military, and which continued to operate long after the original foes of the Church had ceased to inspire fear. We mark the regular and stern discipline which obtained in the army of the Soldiers of Christ; the absolute renunciation of the world required in view of celestial rewards; the ignorance that was encouraged of all but the will of their Superiors, conveyed allegorically under the name of precepts, or interdicts, or examples of the Lord and the Apostles.

There was published at the Vatican Press in 1538 the writings ascribed to "Joannes Cassianus the Hermit," which are said to have been corrected from a vast number of faults by the aid of most ancient MSS. The book was dedicated to Gregory XIII. And we are told that these works of Cassian were recommended by the high authority of Pope Gregory I., of St. Benedict in his Rule, of Thomas Aquinas and many others. Cardinal A. Carafa

The Collations of John Cassian, the Hermit.

was the patron of this edition, and P. Ciaconius was of great assistance to it. All that the editors knew about Cassian was derived from Benedictine sources, Trithemius and others who wrote during the Revival; nor is it possible to find a trace of the existence of these works before the late fifteenth century.

The Latin of this edition is of admirable lucidity and precision; nor is it easy to overrate the value of the work as a revelation of the enthusiasm which created the great Christian ideals, and of the literary process by which these ideals were presented in historic forms. Thus the dress of the monk as soldier of Christ is said to have been worn by Elias and Eliseus, the founders of the Profession in the Old Testament, and then by the princes and authors of the New Testament—John Baptist, Peter, Paul, and others. The camels'-hair vestment and the skin girdle of John, the sandals of Peter, and again the girdle of Paul, are all treated as figurative of the Profession; as are the saints of old said by the Apostle to have wandered in sheepskins and goatskins. The interdict of Shoes is made an Evangelical Interdict, and the conceded Sandals must be removed at the celebration of the holy mysteries.

That passion for Uniformity which continued for so many generations to inspire the Church is essentially a military necessity, and dictates the precepts concerning the canonical prayer and labour without ceasing, in all their details. Unanimity is idealized in the scene of the *Acts*, where all believers have one heart and soul, and there is none but common property. Common prayer at the canonical third, sixth or ninth hour is encouraged by corresponding representations. For example, not only at the

Allegories
of the
Monastic
Profession.

Unanimity
and
Uniformity.

sixth hour was the Immaculate Victim our Lord offered, but Peter at the same hour saw the Vessel let down from heaven by the four corners, which meant the quadriform story of the Evangelists. "As it were a sheet" is well said, because a sheet is the sign of mortification; and since the Passion was voluntary on the part of the Lord, who died according to the flesh, but not according to the spirit, it is but a *quasi* sheet, containing all the nations, purified by faith. The ninth hour is rendered awful by the descent to the Inferno, or beautiful, by the memory of Cornelius, or of Peter and John going up to the temple.

The once weekly monastic custom of washing of feet as a mutual service gave rise to the prototypical scene of the Gospel.

There are many illustrations of the manner in which our Apostolic text has been confused by additions from different hands; or the logical connection has been broken. Our monk, for example, read in his Latin Apostle the Sentence: "*Who was made to us of God, wisdom, justice, sanctity and redemption.*" It was intended to teach that these and other virtues were *distributed* among the brethren of the Order; so that "*Christ was divided*" by members among each of the saints. Another Sentence seems to have stood: "*We see not yet Christ made all things in all,*" which implies that *partially* he may be found in all, each brother having his own peculiar virtue. Then another Sentence, "*When all concur to the Unity of faith and virtue, we return to the perfect man,*"—that is, Christ perfects the fulness of His body in the framework and propriety of the singular members. Another Sentence ran, "*Until the time when*

Structure of
the Apostolic
Text.

God shall be all things in all," implying, as before, that this ideal can at present be but partially realized by the distribution of virtues. Now these Sentences are scattered in four different epistles in our New Testament.

The idea of the monk as the athlete of Christ, whose life is an Olympian struggle for the Crown, is the clue which serves to unite The Athlete of Christ. several passages, now sundered in the *Apostle*. Restored to their proper connection, we read:—" *He who strives not lawfully can neither contend in the agon, nor earn the glory of the crown of victory. And if we fail in this contest we are shown to be slaves of carnal concupiscence, and must forthwith be repelled with disgrace from the spiritual competition; for every one who does sin is the slave of sin.* Legitimate strife is when we first conquer our own flesh. Failing in this, the *Apostolic* word becomes applicable to us, *Temptation seizes you not, unless what is human*; the meaning being that if we have not acquired vigour of mind in that lower kind of temptation, we shall not deserve to try the more serious contest with *celestial wickedness*. For we have been unable to subjugate the frail *flesh which resists our spirit.*"

Here, the Benedictine says, some have misunderstood the testimony of the *Apostle*, and have substituted the optative for the indicative mood: "*May temptation not seize you, unless human!*" But the *Apostle*, he adds, was giving utterance to a reproach, or a declaration, not a wish. Again the passages in the *Apostle*:

" *I run, not as uncertainly, I fight not as beating the air, but I chastise my body, etc.; forgetting the things that are behind, I stretch to those which are before, etc.; I have striven in the good agon, I have finished the course,*

I have kept the faith ; there is laid up for me a crown of justice, and not only for me, but for all who love His advent :" are all to be understood as illustrating the first principle of the spiritual contest, viz. that the flesh, especially the lust of gluttony, must be subdued.

To "*love the Advent of Christ*" is above all to love that daily intercourse of the soul with him which is attained by the castigation of the body, as the Sentences read: *I and my Father will come unto him and make our abode with him. I stand at the door and knock, etc.* Naturally, passages in the Canticles are drawn upon to illustrate this mystic daily communion, this dwelling of Christ in the interior man through faith in the heart. The interior peace of the monk is gained by a spiritual abstinence from his besetting sins, and he thus merits to receive Christ into himself as his guest. The narratives in the Gospel about entertaining Christ have the same meaning. The duty of fasting being voluntary may give way to the necessity of charity, as when brethren come in the course of travel to a monastery. Allegorically this is the visit of the Bridegroom himself. While it lasts, fasting will be suspended. When He is gone the suspended fast will be resumed.

In this warm atmosphere of the mystical life there is no place allowed for idle tales, nor even for history sacred or profane. These spiritual babes may dispense with Greek, and may find the solution of any scriptural difficulties in prayer or in the correction of carnal vices. Then the veil will be withdrawn from dark questions, and revelations will be made by the grace of the Holy Spirit. To the cœnobites alone it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom: the multitude outside may be amused with parables which really convey nothing.

There are two passages in the *Apostle* which should be connected together, if we would understand the range of ideas to which they refer. As we ^{Dæmon-}_{ology.} have seen, the conflicts of the Athlete of Christ are graduated; if he has vanquished flesh and blood, he has then to encounter "principalities and powers." The following sentences are rendered from the Latin *Apostle*:

"Our struggle is not against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities, against the Rulers of this darkness of the world, against wicked spiritual beings in celestial places. . . . Neither angels, nor principalities, nor virtues, nor other creature can separate us from the charity of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Behind these Sentences is an elaborate angelology and dæmonology. And in the discussion of the question we clearly understand why it never could be right to give the book to the common people in their own tongues. Some things in Scripture may be plain even to the dullest minds; but other matters open an immense field of discussion to the studious. God, it is maintained, never intended that all should be placed on one level in point of knowledge. The Scripture is like a fertile field which furnishes a variety of food for the needs of men. But some of these foods are ready for use, others need the operation of cooking over the fire. All, for example, can understand the *Shema Israel* of the Old Testament, repeated in the New: *Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God!* But other sayings require softening by means of the allegorical interpretation; otherwise they will do more harm than good.

There are narrow, modest monks who are in danger of taking many passages too literally, because, owing to the *Apostolic* word, they have a *zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.* For

Allegorical
Interpre-
tations.

example, take the following Evangelical or Dominical passages :—

“ Let your loins be girt, and lamps burning. . . . He that hath not a sword, let him sell his tunic and buy one. . . . He that takes not up his cross and follows me, is not worthy of me.”

Some of these monks, in their simplicity, made wooden crosses, and carried them on their shoulders, and so exposed themselves to the laughter of the spectators. The thing was not done to edification : the interpretation was too literal and historical. There are Sentences which may be understood in both senses, and thus may minister to the vital juices of the soul. For example :—

“ If one strikes thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. . . . When they pursue you in this city, flee to another. . . . If thou wouldst be perfect, go, sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me.”

To employ another analogy. Scripture produces hay for the Cattle. Its fields are full of it. That is to say, you have simple and pure Stories adapted to the small capacity of the meaner minds of whom it is said in the Psalms, *Thou shalt save men and cattle, O Lord!* The object is to fit them for the work and toil of actual life. But the obscure passages are for the student, and admit of double interpretations. For example, the passages in the Gospel concerning the Advent, which in one sense were fulfilled before “the taking of Jerusalem,” in another are yet to be fulfilled at the end of the world. These considerations prepare the way for the discussion of Principalities and Powers.

There was a Beginning before the temporal beginning of the World, as Sentences in the *Gospel* and the *Apostle* teach :—

“All things were made by him, and without him nothing was made. In Christ were created all things, whether in heaven or on earth, visible and invisible, angels or archangels, thrones, dominations, principalities or powers: all things were created by him and in him.”

But some of these spiritual Princes fell. The lapse of the Devil and his angels was followed by the description of Eve, as the *Apostle* says, “Adam was seduced, or rather was not seduced, but yielded to the seduced woman (cf. 1 Tim. ii. 14). The Serpent was punished with perfervid curse. And we need the greatest caution in guarding against his malevolent counsels. For the dæmons gather together in the air, ever in a state of restless activity. These are the Powers of the Air, or the Wicked Spiritual Beings which rule over different nations, and they command legions of inferior spirits and dæmons, as is confessed in the Gospel by themselves. There too the Pharisees speak of Beelzebub, Prince of Dæmons. The blessed *Apostle* looks forward to the time when these grades of devilish Power shall come to an end, saying: “*When he shall have given up the kingdom to God and the Father, when he shall have put an end to every Principality and Power and Domination.*”

Again, the Sentence stands in the *Gospel* concerning the Prince of Dæmons: “*In truth he stood not, because there is not truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own, because he is a Liar and its father.*”

This is to be understood of all slanders directed against the purity of the saints *i.e.* the monks themselves. The “truth” they desire to be acknowledged, is that they themselves are the elect, the very pick and flower of humankind: all who

The Father
of Lies.

venture to deny this are logically children of the devil, and he is in a figure the mouthpiece of all their blasphemies. The "truth" is, that the monks have had experience by perspicuous visions of this dæmonic hatred. For example: a friar was on his road through the desert and at eventide entered a cave to celebrate vespers. Midnight passed as he sang the psalms. As he lay down to rest awhile, bands of dæmons, some preceding, others following their Prince, gathered about him from all sides. The Prince took his seat on a lofty tribunal, reviewed his host, bestowed dire reproaches on those who had failed to circumvent their rivals and praise on those who had deceived the persons assigned to their tempting power. Then one very wicked spirit boasted of his victory over a well-known monk, whose chastity had been overcome after fifteen years' resistance by the charms of a sacred maiden or nun. He had even solicited her in marriage, that he might renew the attempt on her virtue.

There was immense applause at the end of the story, and the Prince of Darkness bestowed upon his faithful warrior the highest applause. But when day came on, and the host of devils had vanished, the good friar began to doubt of the charge of incest thus brought against perhaps an innocent brother. He repaired to the city where the accused one dwelt, and ascertained that on the very night when the evil spirit had announced his fall to the Prince and his band, the monk had in fact quitted his old monastery, and repairing to a village, had suffered a miserable lapse from his virtue.

The curious thing is that in these teachings, no sooner is the saying of the *Gospel* or the *Apostle* taught in its abstract generally than its force is attenuated by remarkable exceptions. You are to treat attacks upon

the character of monks as emanations of the Father of Lies; but you are to remember that among his active emissaries who are watching your conduct, there are those who will detect and make known the truth to your discredit. Watch, therefore, watch! Remember that each of you has a bad or a good angel attending his steps, as is plainly taught in the *Shepherd* of Hermas, in the *Gospel* concerning the "little ones" (who are always the monks), in the legend of Peter's angel, and in the book of Job; or in the example of the devil who stood at Judas's right hand.

The illiterate brethren may derive great solace from the example of the illiterate St. Antony. Evil spirits were sent to his cell by the arts of certain magical philosophers. When they saw him sign breast and brow with the sign of the Cross they retired. Other spirits more accomplished in the craft were sent, but with the like result. A third attack was made upon the Soldier of God, the object being merely to drive him out of his cell. But they could not make him budge a point, so great was the virtue inherent in the profession of Christians. And yet these fierce spirits of darkness could by their numbers have overclouded sun and moon, had they been directed thither. These discussions must end with a prayer that we may have more of that Charity which is the same with the Fear of the Lord and the beginning of wisdom, which will protect us against the diabolic shafts and snares. Outside the cloister is a world lying in darkness and the power of the Wicked One.

If the reader demands of what relevance are these discussions to the subject of English History, the answer is that they are of the greatest relevance, because they bring to light the

Principles of
Education.
All History
is Allegory.

principles of our early educators, and the peculiar economy in their importation of ideas. The knowledge of "this world" is treated as either useless or merely of present convenience; while spiritual knowledge is either practical and moral, or theoretic and contemplative. There is no room whatever in such a scheme for mere matter of fact respecting a world already condemned as dark and wicked. The way in which Scripture was written and designed to be understood is also the way in which the stories of our kings were written for a similar purpose.

You are to understand nothing *au pied de la lettre*, you are carried off your feet into tropological, allegorical, anagogical meanings, in imitation of the science of the Jews. And thus, while History seems to contain the knowledge of past things, it is really the envelope of present and visible things. Abraham had two sons; but you have not Science till you see with the *Apostle*, that the Two Testaments are meant. The Jerusalem above means the Church of Christ, or else the Soul of Man. When the *Apostle* refers to speaking "in revelation" he refers to Allegory or spiritual sense in historic form. The baptism of Moses in the cloud and the eating of spiritual food and drinking of spiritual drink is the prefigurement of the Body and Blood of Christ. It is, however, the "simple order of historic exposition" without occult meaning when the *Apostle* says, "I delivered to you first of all that which I received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." In the simplest acceptation, therefore, History is the deduction from a previous theory about the Old Testament. To inquire further would be to seek the knowledge which puffs up rather than illuminates.

One cannot but smile at the grimaces with which a

brother confesses to the good Abbot who is supposed to be listening, that his mind is infected with poetic songs, and that the tales of Wars and the images of Heroes will intrude upon him at the time of prayer and psalm-singing. The remedy is more earnest concentration upon that spiritual science which is so superior to all else, and which none but pure minds can enjoy. Whatever appears to the contrary, neither Jews nor Hæretics can possess true knowledge; for the treasures of it are in Christ alone, that is, in the monasteries. The rest is "knowledge falsely so called," against which the *Apostle* warns young Timothy. Let it be remembered that, as we read in the *Acts*, Peter and John were admired for their constancy, albeit they were unlettered men and *idiotes* in the old sense of the word. Remember also how in an *Apostolic* passage the connection of virtues shows that vigils and fasts prepare chastity, and chastity leads to science, and science to long-suffering, etc.

In short, the good monks who are true to their discipline and to the credulity towards their superiors, which is the principle of their education, have no need of any other teaching. Are they not gifted with diverse gifts, are they not in receipt of an unction from the Holy One, do they not know all things? How absurd to suppose that under such a system it had been found necessary in the monasteries to keep registers of passing events in this idle world!

Amidst these fascinating *Collations* there is not an Abbot who comes forward to lecture us on the convenience or the duty of telling the whole truth and nothing but the truth concerning any matter of fact. Nor can we at all understand the conditions under which English Story was composed, until their principles in this respect are understood. In the Collation or

Definition, then, you are taught that "perfect men" should never make an absolute statement.

The ques-
tion of
Veracity.

But if a rash statement has been made, it is pardonable and praiseworthy to alter it or to break your word for the sake of greater spiritual gain. You must not look upon it as quibbling, but as correction of rash and faulty statements. It can be most plainly shown from Scripture that this is right. Examples prove how fatal it would often be to adhere to our word, and how often useful and salutary to retire from it.

How rash was the Sentence of Peter, the holy apostle :

Absolute
Statements
forbidden.

Thou shalt not wash my feet for ever! He departed from it and so earned the immortal society of Christ, and all the saints. Of the two Sons in the parable, he who refused to go into the vineyard at the behest of his father was not injured by his refusal because he "corrected his statement," while his brother made a good statement but did not fulfil it. How much better would it have been for the cruel Herod, if he had *not* kept his oath and had *not* slain the Forerunner! Through fear of perjury he incurred damnation to perpetual death.

You must consider in all affairs the *end* and direct your course accordingly. In all cases, it is not the process of the work, but the will of the worker that you must look at. It does not signify *what* is done so much as the *wish* of the doer. Men have done things out of which good has arisen and they have been condemned and contrariwise. You need not show a blameworthy beginning, if you have a necessary and holy end in view. The Traitor procured the saving Passion of the Lord, an event of highest use to the world. And yet of him it was said,

Value of
Actions in
their end.

Better for him if he had not been born! On the other hand, the patriarch Jacob from holy motives lied and cheated his brother out of his heritage, and was exempt from blame. God inquires merely into the "destination of the mind," not into the means by which it arrives.

This is the reference in the *Apostolic* saying concerning "thoughts mutually excusing or accusing one another." All that is done for the charity of God and love of piety which has the promise of the present and the future life is worthy of the highest praise, though the beginnings appear to be harsh and adverse. You have to offer a pure heart to God, and therefore need not shun to break your incautious promises. There is no occasion to talk of a *lie*, but merely of "*prudent and salutary correction of a thoughtless statement.*" It seems that, after the analogy of a physical life, we may advance from spiritual infancy to "the perfect man, and the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ," not by a "course of various lying," as some would say, but by a "series of changes" which mark our "growing robustness." It is implied that ordinary truthfulness is the affair of babes in Christ, not yet weaned or out of their swaddling-clothes.

It is true that a prophet says, "Thou shalt destroy all them that speak lies," and the *Gospel* says, "Let your speech be Yea, Yea; Nay, Nay." And may not "our conscience" give occasion to falsehood among "the weak brethren"? The answer is that you must not charge the truth of Scripture for fear of scandals to the weak. You must understand that Saints use falsehood like hellebore—a poison, yet in dangerous disease the means of health. Consider the venial lie of Rahab, by which,

Falsehood as
Hellebore.

though an unchaste person, she earned eternal benediction, with a place in the list of patriarchs and progenitors of our Lord. Delilah, on the other hand, who betrayed the truth to those who sought it, has left a memory of crime. If some scrupulous brother objects that this lying was only permitted "under the law," and the "rudiments of the times," it is hard to find an answer to him. But if, as is clear, the licence of lying was not indulged under the Old Testament, yet was often venially practised, the superiority of the present dispensation will be evinced by greater indulgence in favour of others' good.

In the *Apostle* it is written, "Lie not one to another." But it is also written, "Let no one seek his own, but another's good; charity seeks not her own; I do not seek my own profit, but that of many." The argument conducts us at last to the conclusion that it is very selfish to speak the truth when it is merely useful to ourselves. We shall quite satisfy the Apostolic command if we prefer others' welfare to our own caprices, and then we must of necessity lie. We must relax our strictness, and become with the *Apostle* weak for the weak's sake. How noxious truth often is, may be seen in the examples of the Apostles. James and the Princes of the primitive Church desired the apostle Paul to play the hypocrite by shaving his head and conforming to Judaism for the sake of gaining the weak. How salutary was the hypocrisy to the whole Church. Paul's life was saved by it.

You may observe that he was always of the same temperament: "*as a Jew to the Jews,*" etc., "*all things to all men.*" You hear him telling the Galatians, "*If you be circumcised, Christ*

Veracity
must yield
to Charity.

The Ex-
ample of
Paul.

shall profit you nothing," and yet you find him taking up a certain shade of Jewish superstition when he circumcises Timothy. Although you read his word, "*I through the law am dead to the law,*" you find him in the *Acts* "*purifying himself*" according to the law. You hear him at Athens talking as if he were not under the law and citing a profane Inscription and a Gentile poet, as if he knew nothing at all of that divine law, nothing of Moses and Christ. He advanced through falsehood to the truth. Then you notice that he "indulges" those who cannot contain themselves, instead of "commanding." He feeds the Corinthians with milk and not with meat. He has a word for matrimony, and a word against it. He practises what he preaches, and is without offence to Jews, Greeks, and the Church of Christ, pleasing everybody, not seeking his own utility, but the salvation of many. He compared the Righteousness of the Law to loss and to dung that he might gain Christ or make Christ a gain. His heart was not in the offerings of the Law; he says himself that it would be prævarication in him to build again the things he had destroyed.

But his principle was to make light of the act itself in the intensity of his affection for souls. He knew that truth was hurtful to some, and falsehood profitable. Immortal Paul! how worthy of a place beside the immortal Rahab and to be contrasted with those truth-tellers who deserved to be rooted out of the earth, Saul and a Delilah, of whom we are again eloquently reminded. And what exemplary figures of speech Paul uses when he desires to half conceal the truth: "*I know a man in Christ caught up to the third heaven.*" The Doctor of the Gentiles prefers to put forward his revelations under the mask of another. So, it may be added,

do all the Benedictine historians. They admit it, a useful and edifying practice in reference to the younger brethren. It is more in accord with rectitude to lie under the colour of these figures than to stick to the observance of the absurd "truth," and to incur the reproach of vanity by talking of our virtues. To hold our peace might be equally to deprive our young friends of edification.

Our good Abbot labours his point, so anxious is he to sanction the licence of fickleness and inconstancy under the example of the Apostle, as well as of Old Testament saints. Though in writing to the Corinthians, Paul makes an absolute promise to return to them, saying, "*I will come to you when I have passed through Macedonia, for I will pass through Macedonia, but with you I will remain or even winter with you,*" in a second letter he recalls the subject: "*In this confidence I desired first to come to you that you might have a second grace, and through you I might cross into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia come to you, and by you be led into Judæa.*" However, a sounder counsel supervened, he did not execute his promise, as he evidently confesses when he asks, "*Did I use levity in this purpose? Are my thoughts according to the flesh, that my word should be a Yea-Nay?*" He goes on to declare *why* he preferred to break his word, swearing a solemn oath as he does so: "*I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came not beyond Corinth. For I resolved this with myself, that I would not come to you in sadness.*"

The Obliga-
tion of the
Oath.

A monk should not bind himself on oath under the influence of any passion; but if he has done so, he should be, like the sweetly reasonable Fathers, as wax before the fire in the

presence of reason and better counsels. They that will obstinately stick to their word are unreasonable men and without discretion. So are the obligations of the word and the oath broken asunder like tow, so is the best morality that prevails in "I would" treated with utter disdain. The New Law establishes a new morality, according to which the monk need only swear and resolve to keep the "principal commands" on which his salvation depends. For these, if necessary, he must be willing to die. For the sake of that new and peculiar virtue called Charity, for the sake of Chastity, sobriety and justice, there must be unflinching perseverance to the end; and the slightest recession is damnable. But as for bodily exercises which profit little—fasting, abstinence from wine or oil, confinement to the cell, reading and meditation—you are bound by no law, the question is one of utility. Let the *Apostolic* word be recalled, "*Where there is no Law, there is no prævarication.*"

It was the masterpiece of Benedictine art thus to portray the character and temperament of an astute Abbot under the person of the Apostle Paul, who is made to claim a boundless licence to trespass upon the common morality of the world in the interests of his conscience, of Christ, and all-grasping ambition of his Charity. It is common to lay at the door of the Jesuits all the slipperiness, the duplicities, the sophistries, the juggles with words and ideas which are here recommended. This is unjust; for these vices were of earlier introduction, and they are the canker at the root of every ecclesiastical organization founded on the New Law. And once more, the employment of such an enginery of falsehood as that disclosed in the authoritative documents of the earliest Christian family

can only be excused on the assumption of a state of perpetual War, where every species of craft or of violence is permissible in pursuit of the one object and end of a universal conquest.

Let us take some illustrations of the method of sacred Illustrations from Bede. fiction from other writings of the Order, nearly of the same period with the Collations of Cassian. The Sentences of the *Gospel* and the *Apostle* once inscribed and quoted, stimulated the production of a great quantity of these fictions. The following are taken from the legends concerning England, all of them Benedictine of origin, during the Revival of Letters.

It was their law that a man should not wed his brother's wife, and John Baptist is made a martyr in defence of it. He died for "the Truth," and the Truth is identical with Jesus Christ. So St. Gregory is made to explain to St. Augustine, our English Apostle. Since the English practise that execrable custom, the policy of utility must be pursued toward them. In some cases there must be connivance, in others denunciation and excommunication. We are not far from the time of Henry VIII. The "rude nation of the English" are to be informed that matrimony is not in itself a fault, but they are forbidden to associate any pleasure with the connection. The *Apostle* "indulged" matrimony and so proved that there was scandal in it. That great soldier of the Dominical army spoke of himself as a fighter, yet a captive in reference to those carnal pleasures.

The Sentence "*Lord, in thy name even the devils are subject to us*" may equally well apply to the apostles in England, who draw the souls of the people by outward miracles to inward grace, as to the apostles

in France or Germany; and simple people may be frightened by the idea of the coming end of the world, and then be soothed, in the seventh age as well as any other. The blessed apostles Peter and Paul are no less at home in Canterbury than in Rome; and the saying "*Though he is not an apostle to others, yet he is so to us, for we are the seed of his apostleship*" is quite fittingly applied to the blessed Pope Gregory, the converter of England from the power of Satan to that of Christ. But the wealth of the Gregorian mind was not fully disclosed to the world until the year 1707, when the Fathers of St. Maur collected and published his works, an important part of their structure.

They who are responsible for the ideal of the Meek and Lowly Hearted One reveal to us in the person of St. Augustine an apostle who refuses to imitate it in the presence of turbulent "British bishops," who refused to come under the yoke of the Roman observance of Easter. The saint, on the contrary, launches a fatal threat of vengeance at their heads. So terrible is Christ to his proud foes, as the slaughter of the monks of Bangor proved. The system of the Christian Empire is *parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos*.

The New Testament had been framed as a Book of Precedents. Because Peter ordained Clement his successor, Augustine ordains Laurance in his lifetime, and similar successions are continued elsewhere. The holy Laurance stands over against the impure King Eadbald, as the Apostle against the impure Corinthian who was guilty of unheard-of sin. St. Peter favours Laurance with one of his apparitions, in consequence of which Eadbald is terrified and converted, and builds the Church of the Holy Mother of God.

The Book
of Prece-
dents.

The anxiety about the question of mixed marriages shown in the *Apostle* leads to the composition of the story of the wedding of King Edwin, the pagan, to a Christian maiden. After extraordinary efforts, natural and supernatural, on the part of the holy Paulinus and of Pope Boniface, Edwin and his people are at last baptized by Paulinus. To him might well be applied the words in the *Apostle*—he was intensely desirous to espouse Northumbria “*as a chaste virgin to Christ.*” One easily detects the motive in these allegories. The Church must gain the Englishwomen; they must convert the husbands; a little leaven will leaven the lump; a Christian maiden from Christian Kent will be the means of filling dark Northumbria with light. It is against all correct critical principle to apply in such cases what our authors call the “simple historical interpretation.”

But the subject again and again pressed upon our notice in Bede’s Allegories is the observance of Easter. The monk over and over again labours to impress upon us that the Jewish custom had prevailed before the arrival of the Holy Roman missionaries. There was a precedent for this in the practice of the holy evangelist John, the beloved disciple. But it must give way before the dictate of the Prince of the Apostles, the Rock on which the Church was built, and who had the awful power of the keys. There was similar diversity of custom as to the Tonsure; but the Holy Roman tonsure must prevail over the Pauline Oriental tonsure. Here again the difficulties of the New Testament legends are solved, when they are carried into the light of the dogmatic principles of the Church History.

Other stories and sketches illustrate the Apostolic school of art in its principles as traced by Cassian. The

most reverend Father Egbert, in speaking of his early friend St. Chad to the abbot of Lindsey, said, "I know a man in this island still in the flesh, who when that prelate passed out of this world, saw the soul of his brother Chad with a company of angels descending from heaven, who having taken his soul with them, returned thither again." The comment on this discloses the Benedictine opinion of the nature of historical testimony. "Whether Egbert said this of himself or some other, we do not certainly know; *but the same being said by so great a man, there can be no doubt of the truth thereof.*"

When the Abbess St. Hilda of the Benedictine monastery of Whitby died, St. Bees, a nun of the cell at Hackness, thirteen miles distant, saw her soul in like manner conducted to heaven by angels. Another nun in Whitby itself had the like vision; and "*the truth*" was known to the whole monastery in the morning. No wonder that in this favoured monastery was a certain brother, remarkable for the grace of God, on whom the gift of writing verses was bestowed by heaven. This was the incomparable Caedmon, whose gifts and graces remained nevertheless concealed from the English public for eight long hundred years.

The miracles are after the canonical type. If Peter's mother-in-law was healed by a touch of the Divine hand, it was logical that an earl's wife might be cured by applications of holy water, sent by the hand of a bishop, and that she should arise and minister to the men of God. For the waters of the earth have been consecrated by the descent of Christ into them. The cripple cured by Peter and John is a prototype of a dumb youth cured by the holy St. John of Beverley by the application of the sign of the Cross to his tongue.

We have the story from the abbot of the monastery of St. John, who was "*a man of undoubted veracity.*" Another man of God, and successor of St. Cuthbert, quells with ease from the isle of Farne a storm which endangers the lives of his brethren on shipboard.

So did the good Fathers apply their panacea, their trusted drug hellebore, their edifying mendacities, in the spirit of the greatest holiness and charity, for the cure of the rude matter-of-fact imagination of our ancestors. It might seem that there has been an overdose; for certainly from the time when this work began to be known early in the sixteenth century, a certain stupefaction in reference to the history of the English Church has prevailed in the minds of Englishmen.

CHAPTER XV.

POETS AND CRITICS.

I PROPOSE to select in these chapters a few illustrations from the Poets, of the manner in which the conventional Fable of the English past once firmly laid down during the reign of Henry VIII. continued to be recited and sung, to be enlarged by new inventions and additions, and so to be firmly planted in the imagination of the people ; until some critical energy began to make itself felt, with little general effect, in the seventeenth century. A brief account of John Selden, one of the greatest of our scholars and a man naturally of a keen critical turn, will show how impossible it was, even for his acumen, to penetrate to the roots of the system, and to discover the secret of a Literature which had issued from the obscurity of the Monasteries a little more than a century before his time.

The ambition of Drayton was to produce English epics in imitation of the masterpieces of Greek and Roman antiquity. He never thought of inquiring whether he had material of authentic fact which he might render in poetic form. He took the Chronicles for authoritative, as did all of his contemporaries, and was concerned only with the division and arrangement of his work in a manner agreeable to precedent and to the taste of his readers.

Michael
Drayton.

In his "Barons' Wars in the Reign of Edward II.," he, as usual, believes that portents and prodigies must have foreshown the great calamity. His tale revolves about the persons of the Queen, the Mortimers and the Barons, the battle of Barton Bridge and the victory over the Barons; how Lord Mortimer escapes from the Tower, and how France was stirred up to invade England, how king Edward is finally put to death with incredible barbarity, how his successor seizes Mortimer at Nottingham, and how Mortimer expiates his crimes with his life.

In his "Heroical Epistles" he reproduces the old tales of the loves of Henry II. and the fair Rosamond in the labyrinth of Woodstock, —the oldest park in England, as Stow says, and which, as Drayton says, contains still the ruins of the labyrinth. Then king John eloquently woos Matilda, daughter of Lord Fitzwater, who replies to him from the nunnery of Dunmow. Drayton candidly admits that the language of John's letter is more poetical than historical; but he has striven to preserve the character of the king, as traced in the Benedictine chronicles; and that of the chaste Matilda.

Then again fair Isabel, wife of Edward II., appears on the scene, exchanging letters with her lover, Mortimer, with a view to impress the tales about Gaveston on the minds of the reading English public. Edward the Black Prince pays his suit to the Countess of Salisbury in her husband's absence, and is by her discreetly checked. The references of Drayton to the tale as it appears in Bandello, as compared with Polydore and Froissart, are amusing. The Italian poet, it seems, prefers "the grace of conceit to the truth of circumstance." A suspicion that the story is pleasing

fiction does not appear to cross the mind of Drayton, who tells us that the Black Prince was so called because of the dismal battles he fought in France rather than because of his complexion.

Richard II. and Isabel also exchange epistles ; and the critical notes on the past are in general analogous to those of Walter Scott appended to his historical novels. The substance of the tales is not for a moment suspect ; but in the formation a certain license is allowed. Queen Catherine, widow of Henry V., intimates by letter her favour to Owen Tudor, and takes occasion to discourse on her late husband's descent from John of Gaunt, and on English and French blood, with appropriate allusions to the Greek mythology. Then we have allusions to Welsh kings, to Camelot and King Arthur, to the invasions of Welshmen in the time of Rufus and his successors. Naturally, Owen in his reply has to dwell on the ancient crest of the Tudors, the Three Helmets, and must make an appropriate reference to the prophecies of Merlin, and to Bards who kept the records of pedigrees. Owen must also boast of Cadwallader, last of the Britons, and of his descent from him.

Next comes an epistolary interchange between the good duke Humphrey of Gloucester and his wife Elinor, who according to the Chronicles had been convicted of sorcery and conspiracy against the Crown, and who writes from her prison in the isle of Man. She alludes to the slanders of Cardinal Beaufort against her ; he is stigmatized and cursed as a Judas. Allusion is also made to the dark tale that Bolingbroke the necromancer had used magical instruments consecrated by the priest Southwell in Harnsey Park. It is maintained against Beaufort that he designed—

“The crosier staff in his imperious hand,
To be the sceptre that controls the land.”

The poet is full of the question of the Title which Beaufort wished to find for the house of Cambridge as descended from Edmund Langley, duke of York, younger brother of John of Gaunt, so that he might smother the counter-claim of the Yorkists from Lionel of Clarence, the eldest brother. From these fierce declamations the transition is very sweet to lines of great tenderness in which the duke declares his heart to be divided between England and Elinor.

William de la Pole, duke of Suffolk, in writing to his beloved Margaret, for whose sake he had given up Anjou and Maine, and had been driven into exile, reports these scandals and tales about the Yorkist title, the original of which was in Hall's Chronicle. Incidentally we hear of Tours as the place where perpetual peace was made between the English and French kings in the time of Henry VI. The city is said to have been founded by Brutus on his way into Britain. In France, the duke of Suffolk is made to say that he spent a fifteenth's tax which he had raised in England for the nuptials of Margaret. His robe at the wedding was worth more than her father's crown. Margaret in her reply deals with the like material, and with feminine spite sneers at the duchess of York, who is represented as teaching her four sons that they are the true heirs of royalty. If three sons fail, she'll make the fourth a king. Richard III. is thus characterized :—

“He that's so like his dam, her youngest Dick,
That foul, ill-favour'd, crook-back'd stigmatic,
That like a carcass stol'n out of a tomb,
Came the wrong way out of his mother's womb,
With teeth in 's head——”

Some clue is given to the manner in which heraldic devices set the creative fancy of the chroniclers to work. The vermilion rose of Lancaster is proudly contrasted with the bastard weed of York, and the Margarite or Daisy is said to have been worn by princes in honour of the queen. The unruly Bear is a synonym for the earl of Warwick, and bearded staves for his followers. Analysis of these poesies teaches us that from the hints supplied by the badges and arms of the great houses impassioned imagination was set upon its constructive work. The love of Edward IV. for Mistress Shore is presented with all those fascinations of detail which impose upon the understanding, even of the wariest. The king's amorous eloquence is for the most part true to nature, and the curiosity of the reader is set in motion, however vainly, to discover the original of the peerless city beauty. The theory was fixed, from Comines onwards, that Edward IV. must be the ideal of a handsome, chivalrous and amorous king. His besetting sin must be visited, according to the ideas of the times, on his innocent offspring. And the tales were conceived so as to illustrate the theory. Drayton's treatment of the subject is quite moral and improving; he offers some hints as to the current opinion of the theatre as unfit for the resort of respectable women.

The next correspondents are Mary, sister of Henry VIII., widow of king Lewis, and Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk. The queen writes in a style of most entertaining candour to her lover concerning her relations to the French king, to whom she was wedded, as she declares, in consequence of the intrigues of Wolsey. In his reply Brandon offers magnificent compliments to his royal wooer, refuses to boast of his own descent, but is proud to be son of the man who beat

Richard from his horse on Bosworth field, and laid down his life in the cause of Henry Tudor. William Brandon was standard-bearer of Henry, and according to Polydore, chief of the hundred soldiers who fell on Henry's side. But he fell at the first onset of Richard, and nothing is said about his having pulled Richard from his horse.

Henry Howard, earl of Surrey, the prince and poet, the restorer of English glory, writes to the beautiful Geraldine who sprang from the Gherardi of Florence. He had travelled to Italy on the high errand of maintaining the peerlessness of her beauty in public jousts, and indites his epistle from Tuscany. The lines are charming. Drayton half apologizes for representing that Cornelius Agrippa, the wizard, showed Surrey his absent lady in a magic mirror. He makes the earl boast of his blazon, the lion set in the bright silver head and its association with the victory of Flodden. His authorities are Camden and George Buchanan. It is interesting to note the English and Scotch theories of that battle. The English maintained that the wilful perjury of King James V. was punished from heaven by the hand of the Earl of Surrey; but Buchanan saw in his badge—a silver lion tearing in pieces a lion prostrate gules—an insolence which was visited on that earl and his posterity. A good illustration of the manner in which history was the embodiment of party passions and dogmas.

A point of interest in connection with authorship here arises. Surrey is made to praise the poet Sir Thomas Wyatt, both here and in the writings ascribed to his name. There is little or no reason for believing that either Surrey or Wyatt wrote poetry, when we consider what the habit of authors and booksellers was, and

what the literary morality of the time. While it is contrary to all probability that so many men of rank addicted themselves to literature during the Tudor period, it is, on the other hand, tolerably clear that men of rank were flattered by the ascription of fine works of genius to them. If they believed the name of poet to be more divine than that of prince (as Drayton sings), they may have been content to wear it in exchange for patronage extended to a needy bard.

We come upon abundant illustrations of the extraordinary tension of the *amor patriæ* in the poet and his compeers; and the consequent fabrication of antiquity for places and for families of consideration in England. There was a time before Drayton when Windsor Castle was of obscure history; in his time it has become so magnificent that it may stand, as it were, on its own merits, needing not so much decoration of legendary lore. However, Drayton says that Walter of Windsor was the ancestor of his contemporaries, Lord Windsor and the Earl of Essex. Walter of Windsor was planted in the time of the Conqueror. A son of his wedded the daughter of Rees, the great prince of Wales. Nesta, their daughter, became mistress of Henry I. From the same ancestor sprang the Fitzgerald family, of whom was the first Earl of Kildare, ancestor to the lady Geraldine. Drayton leans on the antiquary Francis Thynne, who has satisfied himself of the English original of the Fitzgerald family, to which it appears the Geraldini of Florence belong. The lady of the Earl of Surrey becomingly repudiates Italy in favour of her Irish and English blood.

The letters of Lady Jane Grey and Lord Guilford Dudley give rise to further discussions of family titles. The sorrows of the young pair

Walter of
Windsor.

Brandon
and Dudley.

are a judgment upon the ambition of their fathers, the duke of Suffolk and the duke of Northumberland. Then we are led back by the clue of the Brandon family to the dowager queen Mary of France, one of the fruits of the union of the pure vermilion rose and the purer white on one stalk. Occasion is taken to represent that Henry VIII. distrusted his daughter Mary, and strove to prevent her coming to the throne. The lady Jane is supposed to exult from her room in the Tower in the prospect of martyrdom before—

“The dark and dismal days begin,
The days of all idolatry and sin,”

the days of persecution, of tyranny and of torture. She foresees the accession of Elizabeth who will eradicate idolatry, will restore the glory of Sion, will gather up the sound bones of martyrs from the cinder-heaps, and will extirpate the power of Rome and cast off the yoke of Spain. Drayton supports the theory of the extraordinary intellectual gifts of the lady Jane, and produces an epigram which says that she was born *Graia*, and no wonder she was a *Greek* scholar.

Dudley, in telling the story of his father's expedition against the Norfolk rebels, represents him as going forth with the approval of the whole Council of the land, and that of the Church. He was thought irresistible. “But,” the speaker continues—

“But what, alas! can Parliaments avail
Where Mary's right must Edward's acts repeal?”

The touch is significant. Hereditary right to the throne was yet young in English recognition. The struggle between rival king-makers was still going on. The people in Shoreditch, who gazed in silence at

the troops of the Duke of Northumberland marching toward the North, perhaps murmured among themselves against the man who had put down the rebels under Kett in the Eastern counties. However it may have been, the men of Suffolk are said to have successfully resisted the duke, who found himself forsaken at Cambridge and reduced to despair.

Drayton must be one of our best authorities for those events of which he treats, no doubt with the partiality of an Elizabethan and a Protestant. But with such evidence of the state of things in the middle of the sixteenth century, where the Parliament and the people are still the subjects of manipulation on the part of the principal nobles, how can it be maintained that there was any settled Constitution in England?

The great mass of Drayton's poetry which deals with English legends is in itself a proof that the subject was more interesting than any other to an English audience, and that there was every temptation to the artist to colour his tragic pictures according to the taste of his patrons. It would be sufficient to point to these works alone as evidence of the fact that English history as it has been taught in our schools since the time of Edward VI. owes its charm mainly to the great artists who laboured during the reign of the Virgin Queen. The persons who pass across the stage of fancy in the Norman or the Plantagenet time do not essentially differ from those who were contemporaries of the Elizabethans. They move in the like atmosphere of the creative ideal.

There is good criticism in Drayton. In narrating, for example, the Legend of Thomas Cromwell, earl of Essex, he hints that the statesman Thomas Cromwell. might tell, if summoned from the dead, much truth

that had been suppressed. He had been the object of extreme praise, and of blame equally extreme. He is disguised in fables, and pleads to be heard. Born in a blacksmith's cottage at Putney, he felt the sacred fire glow within his bosom. He desired to travel; and became secretary to the guild of English merchants in Antwerp. He went to Rome and became of influence among his countrymen there. He had to struggle against adverse fortune and lived as a play actor in the company of other poor Englishmen. His busy brain led him to plunge into the political intrigues of the turbulent time, and he returned to England with a knowledge of State secrets professed by few. He found men at home expecting a revolution, and the courtiers slyly fishing in troubled waters with an eye to future advantage.

Cromwell made himself known to Wolsey, the Atlas of the government. He met More and Gardiner. He was employed in the business of the foundation of Christ's College, Oxford, the necessity of raising funds for which suggested the scheme for the spoliation of the monasteries. After his early reverses at the Court, he invented the doctrine of *præmunire* and won his way to the favour of the king and to high fortune. He rapidly ascended the steps of promotion till he became vicegerent of the realm. He liberally repaid all debts of gratitude to old friends he had known in Italy, especially the ruined merchant Friscobald, whom he helped to begin the world anew.

Cromwell is made to explain in a lucid manner the causes of the great revolution which brought low the great seats of old religion in England. The greatness of the Church suffered nothing to grow beneath its shade. There was general turbulence, poverty, discontent

without her walls. There was the awakening of a spirit of incredulity towards the Church dogma, and of impatience of the lavish expenditure of former times upon Church institutions. There was a stern determination to get back the wealth that by the Church had been ill-gotten. Cromwell's skill and experience was brought to bear upon the king, who was taught how limb by limb he might gradually lame the old system. Abbeys as they fell vacant were filled with bad men, so that the system might be brought into contempt. Then the spirit of dissent spread rapidly through the world. The craft and imposture of the churchmen became daily more apparent, and men looked with suspicion on the easily bought salvation.

At last these ill humours came to a head. The religious houses were despoiled, and a number of obscure and base men gained wealth, office, and title by the plunder. There are allusions to *Piers Plowman's* invectives against the sensuality and hypocrisy of the friars. Then Cromwell somewhat abruptly narrates the event of his fall. In self-defence against his foes, he forwarded the confederacy of the German princes and the marriage of Henry with Anne of Cleves. But the wrath of Henry and the malignant slanders of his enemies brought the greatest man in England to inquest before Parliament, who had himself been instead of Parliament, and so to Tower Hill scaffold.

It will be seen that Drayton, writing at an interval of about sixty years after Cromwell's execution, draws the lines of his character with a sympathetic yet uncertain hand. Thomas Cromwell is indeed one of the ænigmas of the English history. How is it that Polydore, who was living in England during the whole period of Cromwell's rise and fall, and for ten years later,

says nothing about him? The whole Legend must have been forming during the latter part of the sixteenth century, and must be in great measure, as Drayton knows, derived from pure invention. The principle of it may in part be traced. The astonishment and the half-superstitious terror with which men looked upon the ruined abbeys and reflected on the great sufferings that had followed in political and social life, created the idea of a punishment and a victim. This was in strict analogy to many other cases that have been noticed. Thus the name of a man of whom next to nothing is historically known has proved the centre of a great system of fable which was still being massed up more than a century after he is said to have perished on the scaffold.*

The "Polyolbion" of Drayton contains a great mass of mythological lore, and may be compared, to the advantage of our countryman, with the "Periegesis" of old Pausanias. Those readers who may find the legends of our streams and villages tedious or wanting in deep popular root, will nevertheless be interested in the sentiment which pervades the verse, and which is similar to that under whose influence the Greek poets built the local legends of Hellas into a system.

This glorious isle of Albion, says the poet, existed long before the all-earth-drowning flood in the time of the Giants. His thought reverts to the ancient British bards who sung the deeds of heroes to their harps, and engraved the prophecies and the genealogies of the aged world in their dreadful verse. He narrates the landing

* Hall, on the other hand, allows us to observe a division of feeling in reference to the fate of Cromwell. Though odious to the prelates, there were many of the people who thought him a useful man and prayed for him on hearing of his doom.—"Biog. Brit.," s.v. "Cromwell."

of Brute with his Trojans at Totnes, of the wrestling-bout between Gogmagog the giant and Corrie Coming of Brute. at the Hoe of Plymouth, and of the bestowal of Cornwall upon the victor. Travelling eastward, our chorographer relates the splendid legend of Bevis of Southampton, whose type partly Bevis. corresponds to that of Hercules, partly to that of a Christian knight victorious over the foul Pagans. His adventures in Damascus find a reflection in the legend of Count Robert of Paris, as treated by Sir Walter Scott.

At Avalon, the grave of Arthur, the poet's musings yield an insight into the state of sentiment Musings of Avalon. prevailing in the Elizabethan time in reference to the decay of the old religion—a wistful yearning for a believed holy and splendid past, with a due consciousness that the doom of the monasteries must have been deserved. Whose the guilt of the ruin of the proud pile of Glastonbury? How was it that neither great Arthur's tomb nor that of holy Joseph of Arimathæa, who had carried God-in-man to his sepulchre, could save these bones from sacrilege? Was it mere fate and course of time or human error that had brought on decay? The legend of the blossoming thorn in winter was still acceptable. So also was the legend that with Brutus there had come Greek philosophers to Grecklade, the original of Oxford University, although Leland had shown in his "Swan Song" that the place was more properly called Lechlade or Creclade.

We follow the chorographer to the Wansdike, and to Stonehenge, which are personified for the purpose of representing Briton and Saxon rivalries. We ascend to the fount of the Thames, pass down the Avon to Bath and to Bristol. We listen to the musical nymphs of

England and of Wales discoursing on the question of their claims to the isle of Lundy. The glory of Arthur is compared with the story of the Saxons, and the wordy strife on the banks of the Severn becomes loud and long. We travel to Carmarthen and listen once more to the tale of Merlin's birth; we visit the cell of St. David. Long does the Muse hover over Wales, unwearied of the theme of the great British kings, the prophecies of Merlin, and the never-to-be-forgotten Brute. Returning to England, she chants the great devotion of the religious Saxon kings, with whose fame the Wrekin rings. Guy of Warwick is celebrated.

From Aylesbury vale we pass to Oxford and thence to Windsor, the seat of the Royal Garter. At St. Albans, the Ver and the Watling are made to discourse of the old Roman roads, and of the Seven Saxon kingdoms. The site of London is extolled; and satires are launched against the idle and luxurious gentry, and the use of tobacco and other foreign commodities. Thames is called upon to sing once more the catalogue of the English kings. We listen to the praises of the men of Kent and of the Eastern folk. At Cambridge the giant Gogmagog is awakened from his slumber to woo the Giant. By the Ouse we are entertained at great length with the tale of the Civil Wars down to the time of the camp on Blackheath. On the isle of Ely the memory of the ancient English saints is revived. The Witham in Lincoln and holy Botolph's town is visited. Justice is done to Sherwood, and the splendid reminiscence of Robin Hood, the darling of the popular heart. The Northern counties are sung, and the poet reposes at length from what he well called his Herculean toil, on the banks of Eden, pointing to the little

rising bank which commemorates Arthur, and which men call his Table.

The poem has been illustrated in the earlier Songs by the rich learning of John Selden, a man who united strong common sense with his erudition; but who, as will be presently seen, was unable to direct the sceptical energy of his mind to the ascertainment of the actual source of these splendid fictions. The study of the poem together with his notes teaches us to what a height the tide of patriotic passion had risen during the sixteenth century, what a mass of false documents had been produced to gratify it, and how utterly impossible it was for any truly critical spirit to make itself felt in the examination of them. It was no doubt to be expected in our poets if they endeavoured to kindle a warm affection for all parts of the island in the minds of the upper classes, the only readers or listeners to these legends. English mythology was made a sacred thing, a means of uniting the people in one political faith, the personal object of which was the sovereign. It was a great feat of art to make out these long pedigrees of British, Saxon, and Norman kings, and to rescue out of these so hoary and indefeasible a title for the princes of the House of Tudor.

And yet a great mischief was done. The glory and greatness of England did not consist in the ability to produce a long Catalogue of Kings, and a mass of imaginary archives. It lay in the stout hearts and the strong hands of the mass of the people. Useless to blame men of letters because they work within the only conditions prescribed for their successful activity. And yet one cannot but regret that there were not among those splendid creators some who listened more closely to the beating of the heart of the unlettered people; and

who could anticipate the oracle of the modern poet, that title, rank, and decoration are mere gewgaws in the light of the worth of man as man. We should not have had to wait so long before a fine articulate utterance was given to the cry of the poor commons demanding where the gentlefolk were in the days of the ancestral Gardener and his spinster spouse, who

"From yon blue heavens above us bent
Smile at the claims of long descent."

In reference to Spenser, the remark must be re-
Edmund
Spenser. peated, that there is no such gulf between
 him and Chaucer as the fictitious theory of our literature has pretended to fix. The distance of the earlier from the later school is but a distance of two generations or thereabout. And again it must be repeated, that the name of Spenser serves only to mask and protect some unknown poet or band of poets, whose real names have perhaps never been disclosed.

The Spenser family, said to have been one of the richest in the kingdom, was ennobled in the time of James I., and it is of course possible that a namesake was concerned in the composition of the "Faëry Queen," but nothing certain is known. The legend concerning Spenser's associates in Cambridge and London leads us, by an indirect clue, into the heart of the mystery of the literary society of the time. Thus Gabriel Harvey is said to have been Spenser's friend at Cambridge, and Harvey becomes a barrister in London. Thomas Nash is supposed to lash Harvey with his satire because of his astrological Almanacs. And Harvey in his turn is said to trample on Robert Greene, after the death of the latter from a surfeit of pickled herrings and Rhenish wine. Such are the curious stories reported by Wood, who in his dulness did not perceive that they formed

part of a system of jest and disguise on the part of the *littérateurs* of the late sixteenth century.

Through all the dim Spenser legend we can discern nothing certain, unless it be the fact that the poet lived and died a poor man supported by the patronage, it may be, of Spenser, Raleigh, Desmond and other great men of the Court, whom he rewarded by the splendid allegorical flatteries of his verse. The bitter complaints of indigence, of neglect, of positive enmity to the poet and his writings to be found in the "Faëry Queen," echoed in the "Return from Parnassus," and in the "Purple Island" of Phinæas Fletcher, may be regarded as the general complaints of the poets in a turbulent time, amidst influences unfavourable to the Muses. To cite from Fletcher's words, the poet was no doubt one of those

"Lurking strawberries, shrouded from high-looking eyes,
Shewing that sweetness low and hidden lies."

A few illustrations of the way in which this great poet conceives of English History may here be given.

In the course of the captivating allegory of Spenser, he leads us to the house of the Soul, figured as the lady Alma. In the turret which represents the Intelligence are three Rooms, occupied by three different Sages. The first is Phantastes, who is still young in years, but dark and melancholic of aspect, born under Saturnine skies. His chamber is depicted with impossible and possible shapes, with monsters, animals, and human beings; while the buzzing of a multitude of bewildering flies represents the confusion of—

"idle thoughts and fantasies,
Devices, dreams, opinions unsound,
Shows, visions, soothsays, and prophecies;
And all that feigned is, as leasings, tales, and lies."

In such a chamber English intelligence had been dwelling since the revival of learning.

In the second room sits Judgment, a man of mature age, who by meditation on philosophy and by practice has become wondrous wise. Scenes in the courts of justice, representations of all the achievements of art and science adorn this room; and the visitors, Prince Arthur and Sir Guyon, are attracted to the goodly reason of the grave occupant, and desire to be his disciples. But the chamber of the Critic was as yet frequented by few of the choicest spirits in England.

In the third chamber, old and ruinous, yet strongly walled, sits a man aged and decrepit, but vigorous of mind. His years exceeded those of Nestor or of Methusalem, whose infancies he could call to mind—

“His chamber all was hang'd about with rolls
And old records from ancient times derived,
Some made in books, some in long parchment scrolls,
That were all worm-eaten and full of canker-holes.”

He sits in his chair, endlessly turning over these, and waited on by a little boy who reaches them down from the walls. It is an allegory of Memory and Recollection. Nor is it to be doubted that Spenser believed literary monuments to have been handed down from the times—

“of King Nine,
Of old Assaracus and Inachus divine.”

He is a witness to that confusion between classical and Biblical lore which prevailed. And although he distinguishes in the allegory between the products of phantasy and historic records, in practice he was unable

to separate the one from the other. For Prince Arthur, in examining the library of Memory, comes upon "Briton Moniments," which contain the inventions of Geoffrey of Monmouth; Sir Guyon selects a treatise on the "Antiquity of Faëry Land." The passion which stimulates their curiosity is still *Amor Patriæ*, of which Polydore had spoken as tending to blind the judgment. Both—

"burn with fervent fire,
Their country's ancestry to understand."

It is here that our great poet feels the need of resources for the haughty enterprise of relating the famous ancestries of Queen Elizabeth. The Ancestry of Elizabeth. In this respect she surpasses all earthly princes. There is no lineage like hers under the sun. It stretches to heaven, it is the wonder of the world, an argument worthy of the pen of Homer or even of the rote of Apollo. Elizabeth derives from Arthur. The noble deeds of her sires were told in the Old man's book in the ruined chamber. We are wafted back to the time when Britain was a savage desert, "unpeopled, unmanur'd, unprov'd, unprais'd." Then the adventurous seafarer, steering free of the white rocks, named the isle Albion. In the interior were hideous giants and half-beastly men, lurking in their lairs, or flying like the roebuck through the fen. At last Brutus of old Assarac's line conquered Brutus again. the isle, aided by the eponymous heroes of Cornwall and Devonshire, viz. Comiens and Devon, and Canute, the hero of Canutium or Kent. The series of tales concerning the nymphs of rivers, or the founders of cities, follows. The boiling waters of Bath are traced to the art of King Bladud, whose soaring ambition led to his destruction.

The story of King Lear and his three daughters is told. Lear dies in ripe age ; Cordelia, oppressed by her nephews, hangs herself in prison. So we pass on to the brothers Ferrex and Porrex, and the end of Brutus' sacred progeny, which had held the sceptre for 700 years. Discord and faction followed, until there uprose the matchless Molmutius, the Sacred Legislator, the recipient of visions and revelations, as some men say. He freed the Highway, protected the Church and the Ploughman. He was the Numa Pompilius of Britain. And the tale flows on, through the exploits of Brennus and Belin and others, till we arrive at King Lud, founder of London out of the ruins of Troynovant, who lies in his solemn tomb at Ludgate. We come to the times of Cassibelaun and Cæsar, of Cymbeline and the Incarnation of the Eternal Lord—

“ from wretched Adam's line
To purge away the guilt of sinful crime.”

Good King Lucius is named as the first recipient of Christianity, though long before Joseph of Arimathæa had come hither, bringing the Holy Grail. Then there pass in review the splendid figures of Boadicea, our British Semiramis, and her successors, to King Cole of Colchester, the renewer of the decayed monarchy, the father-in-law of the emperor Constantine. The tales of the Picts and Scots, and of the Saxons with their eponymous heroes, Hengst and Horsa, follow, till we repose at Stonehenge by the tomb of the peaceful Aurelius. Prince Arthur reads on till he comes to the name of Uther Pendragon, with which the Chronicle abruptly ends. Meantime Sir Guyon is tracing the genealogy of the race of elves from Prometheus down to Gloriana.

But Spenser takes occasion to indulge in a fine patriotic outburst, which is placed in the mouth of Arthur :—

“ Dear country ! O how dearly dear
Ought thy remembrance and perpetual band
Be to thy foster-child, that from thy hand
Did common breath and nouriture receive !
How brutish it is not to understand
How much to her we owe, that all us gave ;
That gave unto us all whatever good we have ! ” *

Spenser's Muse is splendidly subservient to the courtly theory of English history. Later in the poem, the prophet Merlin, on the fall of Cadwallader and the failure of the antique Trojan blood, foretells how after twice four hundred years the Britons shall be restored to rule. But first the Danish raven shall send his faithless chickens over the fruitful plains of England, and the roaring Lion of Neustria shall tear the crown from the head of Harold. On the accomplishment of the time, a long-hidden spark of fire shall be kindled anew in Mona, and burst into flame that shall reach to the house of royal majesty. There shall be eternal union and sacred peace between the factions. And at last the Royal Virgin shall reign, shall stretch her white rod in protection over the Belgic shore, and smite the great Castile a deadly blow.

Then again we have references to the design of Brute's huge mind to make Highgate the bound of this great city of New Troy or London ; and other swelling vanities of English ambition. The poet nowhere pretends to be a critic, he leaves such matters to more learned men. His inspiration teaches him only to exalt the island and the Virgin Queen. Dimly we see

* “ The Faëry Queen,” Bk. II. Cantos ix. and x.

moving through the mist of ideal and allegorical intuition the Earl of Leicester and other great men of the time, whose persons and whose deeds are magnified to correspond to some poetic prototype. We understand how the stimulation of the poetic faculty in that age, how the large and exundant flow of song has caused a great illusion in our own minds. We behold types of mere human grandeur on the scene; the dwarfed and the mean are hidden from us.

And yet there are occasional glimpses in Spenser of a repulsive state of society. Who can forget the picture at the end of his great work, of the Blatant Beast, by which he seems to signify the spirit of envy, of faction, of hate and slander which was everywhere fiercely active, attacking all classes and all ranks in society. Some might call it the spirit of Criticism in awakening England. The Beast had left traces of havoc everywhere. The sacred class, the professional upholders of purity, had not been spared. The cloisters had been invaded, the monks had been hunted into their dormitories; their cells had been overhauled. The discovery of filth and ordure were irksome to report; but the foul Beast was reckless of religion and of the holy calling of these men. He broke into the church, robbed the chancel and defiled the altar, cast the images to the ground.

The gentle spirit of the poet is appalled at the violence of the language he hears, directed against the old institutions. It is like a thousand tongues, of barking dogs, of wrawling cats, of growling bears, or grinning and snarling tigers. Worst of all were the reckless tongues of mortal men, with which were mingled the three-forked tongues of poisonous serpents. After he has been more than

The
Puritans.

once subdued, the Beast is still raging again beyond restraint, assailing alike the innocent and the guilty. He spares neither the learned men nor the poets, he rends without regard of person or of time. The homely verse of the "Faëry Queen" may not hope to escape his venomous spite, any more than the poet's former writings; though they were cleanest from blameful blot. The Poet concludes by exhorting himself to please the public for which he writes; for that is now accounted the chief part of wisdom.

The poet of the "Faëry Queen" is one more witness to the fact, that the man of letters in the Elizabethan time must please by supporting and glorifying the national fables, which once received, had become equally sacred with the Bible, not to say more sacred. And he is in general a witness to the fact, that no man of letters in that time dared to tell what he might think to be the truth about his contemporaries and the passing events of his time.

Spenser believed, in common with his contemporaries, that his Cambridge was of much higher antiquity than Oxford.

Cambridge
and Oxford.

The Sidney family is another of those houses who have been honoured by splendid flatteries in the person of the Philip of the Elizabethan time, the darling of his age. The antiquaries have pretended that the family came from Anjou in the time of Henry II.; yet nothing but the usual vague stories have come down to us concerning Philip himself. The "Arcadia" was put down to him for authors' and booksellers' reasons; though there is no more ground for this than for similar ascriptions. The second and last part have been ascribed to an anonymous, as also a sixth book to an obscure name. The Sidney literature

Sir Philip
Sidney, c.
1554-1586.

may be regarded as the production of scholars in the Inns. The active life of Sidney himself is something altogether different from the life of the man of letters. He perished in war, was greatly lamented; and the publication of poetry under his name was one of the ways in which his memory was honoured.

After reading the tiresome adulations of Sidney, it is refreshing to come upon the shrewd common sense of Horace Walpole, who is astounded at so much noise about Sidney. He points to the contrast between the character of a hot-blooded young man, who after having lived to write with the *sang froid* of Mdlle. Scuderi, died with the rashness of a volunteer. But Walpole did not notice that the interest of authors and book-sellers was to pass off their wares under the sanction of names that had been made objects of idolatry by subservient scribes. How amusing is the remark of another writer, in the light of such facts, that Sidney should have looked into his "noble heart" rather than his "metaphysical head" before he wrote.

Taking the name, however, of Sidney merely as one of the masks of the *littérateurs* of the Inns of Court, there is incidental evidence of value in this literature with reference to the conditions of intellectual activity during the period. Thus in the "Defence of Poesy," one of our bright countrymen defends art against the sour Puritans, who look upon artists as "caterpillars of the Commonwealth." They had need to resort to disguises to hide themselves from the envy of that powerful party. Another point of interest is that in defending the moral use of poetry, the writer in effect defends the allegorical use of English Story. You may tell any tale that pleases and at the same time tends to win the mind of the

listener from wickedness to virtue. Most men, he argues, are childish in the least things, till they are cradled in their graves. When they listen to tales of heroes, they will bear the right description of wisdom, valour and justice. If these had been set out in a bald and philosophical manner, they would swear they had been brought to school again.

In a Sonnet ascribed to Sidney, the writer praises Edward IV. above all our kings ; and this not because of his traditional beauty, wit or valour, not because he overcame the Flower de Luce and the paws of the Red Lion. Small matter of praise in all this ! Edward is to be loved, because he would risk his Crown rather than fail his love. This is quite true to the sentiment with which that king was regarded from the first rise of our national poesy of Kings.

CHAPTER XVI.

POETS AND CRITICS.

IN his Illustrations to Drayton's *Polyolbion*, 1612, John Selden. Selden showed some sense as a Critic. He would "separate the cockles from the Corn." Drayton in his story of early Britain followed Geoffrey of Monmouth, the "Polychronicon," Matthew of Westminster, and "such more," to borrow the phrase of Selden. For his own part Selden rejects the tradition of the Trojan Brute. Further, he has strong suspicions in regard to other parts of these traditions. He has subjected the writers to tests unusual before his time. He has "weighed the reporter's credit," he has "compared with more persuading authority." Selden was aware, like Bentley in a later time, that chronological errors were the surest means of detecting imposture. "Synchronism," he says, "is the best touchstone in this kind of trial." With watchful jealousy he had refused to pass any narrative which did not "bear a mark of most apparent truth." For he had found "intolerable antichronisms, incredible reports and brutish impostures" in these reported ancient writers. These faults proceeded, Selden was aware, not merely from ignorance, but from license of invention assumed by the writers.

Selden draws a distinction between the elder and the later monkish writers. He is not aware that the writers used by Polydore Vergil near a century before him were of recent origin in that writer's time. But Polydore himself, who, it will be remembered, is said to have written at the request of Henry VIII., is accused of error in reference to the statute of the 1st Henry VII. when he asserts that it was death by the English laws for any man to wear a vizard. Other errors in Polydore were in reference to the institution of Trial by Twelve jurors, the Sheriffs, the Court of the kingdom, Parliaments and other matters. Selden also alludes to the notorious story in the Athenian Chalcondylas concerning British customs of salutation— or slander derived from misunderstanding; and to other palpable falsities and untruths in his predecessors.

Selden proceeds to criticise what he calls "*the Arcadian deduction of our British monarchy.*" He is well aware that from Brute, the contemporary of Samuel, judge of Israel in the year about 2850 of the world, to the time of Julius Cæsar, there are no sources of British history extant. There is not an author after Cæsar and Tacitus before Gildas, who is said to have been later than 500 A.D. What, then, is the worth of the pretended Chronologies before his time? "For my part," says Selden, "I believe as much in them as I do the finding of Hiero's shipmast in our mountains," a notion derived from a corrupted place in Athenæus. Nor does Selden believe that Ptolemy Philadelphus sent to Rentha king of Scots about 300 B.C. for the discovery of this country, which was later inserted in the geography of Claude Ptolemy. He does not believe that Julius Cæsar built Arthurshoffen in the sheriffdom of Stirling. He does not believe "Joseph of

Critique of
Selden.

Chronologies
exploded.

Exeter," who writes under the mask of Cornelius Nepos, when he describes Britons as present with Hercules at the rape of Hesione. Such notions may be placed in the same category with the fairy tales of Ariosto, or the droll discoveries of Rabelais. Before the time of Cæsar, Selden will trust nobody.

His sources after Cæsar are Tacitus, Dion, the Augustan History, Gildas, Nennius, Bede, Asser, Ethelwerd (the supposed kinsman of king Alfred), William of Malmesbury, Marianus, Florence of Worcester, and the rest of the Monkish and other Chronographers. Selden observes that "Florence of Worcester" is a copyist of "Marianus," and that the common printed chronicle under the name of the latter is an epitome made by "Robert of Lorraine," bishop of Hereford, as he supposes, under Henry I. Our critic was too early in the field to be able to detect the proleptic nature of this pretended authorship. He believes in the dates assigned to Gildas and the rest; and as for the contents of their books, he will give most credit to the least passionate writer. He begs us not to credit the prophecies of Merlin and other matters in illustration of British fable which he has introduced in his notes.

Merlin
denied.

It is worth while to cite what Selden has to say about Marianus and the chronological question. On Marianus. None before Selden had called attention to the system of the Dionysian cycles. And in discussing the story that the Saxons came hither at the invitation of the Britons, harassed by Picts and Scots, which Selden denies on several grounds, he aims to ascertain in what year this change occurred in the state of Britain. The general opinion following Bede, fixed the arrival of the Saxons in 449 or 450. Selden, on the other hand,

thinks the date must be fixed as 428, the fourth of the emperor Valentinian. The proof is in an old fragment annexed to Nennius, and followed by Camden and others. But how did this discrepancy originate?

Selden, in explaining it, is led to criticise the Dionysian system of Chronology. The abbot Dionysius in the sixth century made his On the Dionysian System. cycle of 532 years. But according to his compute, the fifteenth moon following the Jews' Pass-over, the Dominical Letter, the Friday and other "coincidents of the Passion" must fall in the *twelfth* year after the Nativity. Consequently, if Christ died at the age of thirty-four, twenty-two years must be omitted from the older reckoning. After the abbot, later chronologers added these twenty-two evangelical years to the previously accepted dates. Thus the date of the Saxon landing in 428 *plus* 22 gives 449 or 450, the conventional date of that event in Bede's copies, and in the chronicles ascribed to Marian, Florence, Robert of Lorraine, White of Basingstoke, and others. Selden thought that if the number 22 were subtracted from or added to the conventional dates, gross blunders in our chronologies would be rectified. By transcription, interpolation, misprint, and anachronisms (he adds), the Chronicles had become strangely disordered. Selden thought that abbot Dionysius made a mistake in his calculations, and that he regretted it. He was not aware that Dionysius was an imaginary person, and that the whole Benedictine system was artificial.

Great as were the critical powers of Selden, he was not able to efface from his imagination that ideal retrospect which he had learned at school, and which his friend Camden was teaching the children at

Westminster. He couples with Camden's name that of Girald of Cambria as his British teachers; but it never occurred to him that Girald's work had been written not long before Camden's time. He confesses to an intellectual thirst which compelled him ever "to the fountain-head that he might thereby judge the nature of the river." He denounces the habit of trusting authorities at second hand, and of rashly collecting, as it were, from visual beams reported through another's eye. He has great contempt for the purblind ignorant; and them whose learning has been borrowed from such books as Rabelais characterizes in his description of the library of St. Victor. With these he connects the "Polychronicon," and the chronicles of Caxton, Fabian, Stow, Grafton, Lanquet, Cooper, Holinshed, Polydore, and the rest of the compilers.

The great learning embodied in these "Illustrations of Drayton," together with the constant effort after the truth, reflect the greatest credit upon the early student life of Selden. Nor can it be the slightest disparagement to so great a man, when we recognize that he was unable wholly to disembarass his mind from a massive load of fable. He thought there must be some basis of historic truth at the bottom of all the hyperboles and exaggerations. He did not arrive at the conclusion that the whole system of fable sprung from the ideal faculty, acting in part under the influence of old classical mythology. He wishes that the "poetical Monks," in celebration of Bevis of Hampton, of Arthur, and other such worthies had contained themselves within bounds of likelihood. He wishes that judges like the old Hellanodikai of the Games had given such exorbitant fictions their desert. Statues ought to come down if they exceed the symmetry of the victors. Belief is

yielded, as Pindar sings, to the sweet giver of an enchanting poem. But the undigested reports of barren and monkish invention have given rise to doubt, and even to denial of the truth.

Selden mentions that the sword of Bevis is kept as a relic at Arundel Castle ; but he adds that it does not equal in length the sword of Edward III. at Westminster. The sword of Edward, it may be remarked, was no more and no less authentic than that of Bevis. With regard to Arthur, Selden appears to think that a historic personality was concealed in the cloud of legend, "a man right worthy to have been celebrated in true story, not false tales." To have carried scepticism any further, if it existed in his mind, would have given dire offence to all English readers.

Selden was also to some extent under the influence of the courtly theory of English history. At least, in these illustrations he did not venture to impugn it. He refers to the current story of Henry Tudor, earl of Richmond, and his defeat, with French aid, of the tyrant Richard III. He relates the legend of Macbeth, and how Fleance, son of murdered Banquo, fled for refuge to the Prince of Wales, and wedded his daughter. Fleance later became lord high steward of Scotland. Robert II. descended from him ; and the royal name came down to the mighty sovereign James I., in whom also the blood of Tudor the Plantagenet mixed. The wedding of Henry VII. united those bloods, and the Two Roses. The Muse of Drayton is subservient to the theme of his Majesty's descent and spacious empire. So were the prophecies of Merlin concerning the line of Llewelyn fulfilled. Cambria was glad, Cornwall flourished, the isle was filled with the name of Brute, and the name of strangers had perished.

Some further illustrations of Selden's acumen may be given. We have seen that he draws a line at Julius Cæsar, and refused to admit any anterior sources of knowledge for Britain; and that he denounced a poem falsely ascribed to Cornelius Nepos. The glory of it belongs to an English writer, dated, and we may add falsely, in the time of Henry II. and Richard I. The holy father Thomas Becket is here said to have bought peace at the price of his life. He was murdered in his house at Canterbury, because he urged grievances intolerable to the king and laity, because he diminished the liberties of the Common Law, and maintained the supremacy of Rome. Now, on the question of liberties, Selden refers us above all to Matthew Paris, whose Chronicle ("Hist. Maj.") had been published by Archbishop Parker about half a century before; also to the epistles of John of Salisbury, which have been but lately published; and finally to his own "Janus Anglorum." In this last work the liberties have been "restored from senseless corruption" and are "more themselves than in any other whatsoever in print."

But Selden had no sources for his ideas of Common Law and Liberties but the tales in the monks who write under the names of Hoveden, Gervase of Tilbury, William of Malmesbury, or the Book of the Exchequer, or Lambarde's "Archeion." The theory which Selden and his younger contemporary Coke lived under was that the Common Law was immemorial, that it had been specially honoured by Edward the Confessor; and that "under his name the laws had been humbly desired by the subject, granted with qualification, and controverted, as a main and first part of liberty in the next age following the Norman conquest."

It is evident, from other passages, that Selden could

produce no certain history of English legislation. More than once he refers to the fabled king, Molmutius, who had been planted at an epoch 500 years before Christ, yet who legislated in favour of Churches or Temples. They were to have liberty of refuge and sanctuary. Then King Lucius, of more than six centuries later, who according to the fable was a Christian and a great patron of the Church, laid down that every Churchyard was a Sanctuary. After his time, an immense chasm of about fourteen centuries occurred, until we come to the twenty-second year of King Henry VIII. According to the Records, the licence of Sanctuary was then taken away by Act of Parliament because of its abuses. In a Parliament of James (says Selden), all statutes concerning abjuration or sanctuary made before the 35th Elizabeth were repealed. But Selden will not pronounce an opinion on the question whether the right of sanctuary has or has not been thus restored.

This uncertainty in regard to the Plea of Sanctuary is remarkable in so great an antiquary and lawyer. The privilege was, of course, of Ecclesiastical origin ; and the witness to very incivil times, when it was a greater offence to violate the peace of a Churchyard than to suffer the criminal who had gained its precincts to go free. Except in case of treason or sacrilege, the accused person might flee to the Churchyard, and if within forty days he went in sackcloth before the Coroner and confessed his guilt, abjuring the realm, that is, swearing to quit the kingdom, he might save his life. He repaired with a Cross in his hand to the port assigned him, and embarked, never to return without leave from the king. His blood was attainted, and he forfeited his goods and chattels. Now, though Selden has said that the privilege

of Sanctuary in Churchyards was taken away in the 22nd Henry VIII., it is the statutes of the 27th and the 32nd of that reign which only (according to Blackstone) "abridge the immunity" of these places. The latter adds that it was the statute of 21 James which abolished the privilege of sanctuary and abjuration entirely: one of the few acts of that reign which contributed to the cause of justice. It seems that Selden, writing in the midst of the struggle that was going on between King James and the popular party represented by Coke, is unable to state whether the privilege of Sanctuary is in force or not.

In discussing the privilege of the Highway, Selden goes back to Molmutius in the statute of Privilege of Highway. Marlbridge, dated in the time of Henry III. He cites a phrase to show that none could distrain in the King's highway or the common street, but the king and his ministers, "having a special authority for that purpose." The omission of the last words greatly alters the law, he says, and judgments are given on behalf of the king where common bailiffs have acted, without special authority. Again, Selden states that distress may be taken in certain cases on the highway, and he is at the pains to cite several statutes from the time of Edward I. Yet he adds that *the original Rolls*, with many others, *have been lost*; he has seen only a fair MS. copy which omits the words in question. So does the Register. Other MSS. have not any part of the chapter of the statute to which he refers; and the great lawyer wonders at this, seeing that a formal Writ is grounded upon it. Yet he does not entertain the suspicion of forgery, or does not express it.

Selden proceeds to call attention to a discrepancy in

the language of different copies of the Forest Charter. The charter printed in Matthew Paris as given by King John and the best MSS., yield a sense inconsistent in art. VIII. with that in the copies commonly read. But apparently it did not occur to Selden to inquire into the history of the Charter before it was printed under the eye of archbishop Parker. Conscientious as he was, and impatient of inaccuracies and discrepancies, nature and habit unfitted him to cope with systematic fabrications, who never knew what a literary conscience meant. He was one of those men who, striving with all their might to tell the truth themselves, as nearly as possible, are not well capable of conceiving that others may conspire together for the opposite end.

In the same place, Selden digresses for a moment to point out an error in the Great Charter of 9 Henry III. Boniface, archbishop of Canterbury, is made a witness to that Charter.

It is a senseless blunder, he says, because "Boniface was not archbishop until some sixteen years later." The best copy of the Great Charter that Selden ever saw had the name of "Simon, archbishop of Canterbury." This was a still worse blunder, because there was no such prelate of that see in those times. The transcriber had mistaken the letter S, as if it signified Simon instead of Stephen. For Stephen of Langton was archbishop at the time. But the fact is, that there has never been extant an authentic list of the archbishops of Canterbury for the thirteenth century, any more than there has been a corresponding list of the Popes from that age. Selden concludes his note on Molmutius' highways by pointing out discrepancies in the accounts of these roads in the Benedictines who write under the

Discrepan-
cies in
the Forest
Charter.

Error in the
Great
Charter.

names Ranulph of Chester, Henry of Huntingdon, Roger Hoveden, and Adam of Bremen.

In the seventeenth Song of the "Polyolbion," the poet resumes his personifications, and—

"Great Thames as king of rivers, sings
The catalogue of the English kings."

It begins with William the Bastard, as the Conqueror was commonly called. Selden shows that the title was once a proud one, inserted in the style of great princes. His chief authority for the ideas about William is that master in Benedictine fiction, William of Poitiers, who pretends that the Conqueror on his death-bed claimed to have won the Crown from Harold by the sword, and that he restored it to the Creator. At the same time an anxiety is shown to make out a Title for William, founded on the adoption of St. Edward the Confessor, the oath of Harold, the consanguinity of the conqueror with the conquered.

Selden discloses the idea which generated the myth of William Rufus' death in the New Forest. It was believed in the sixteenth century that William I. had destroyed thirty-six parish churches to make dens for wild beasts. In divine revenge upon him his son Richard is then blasted with infection, Richard his nephew has his neck caught by a bough and broken, and Rufus falls by the unfortunate hand of Tyrrell. With regard to the story of the pulling out the eyes of Duke Robert in Cardiff Castle, Selden compares it with the tales so often to be met with in the so-called "Byzantine historians," like Cantacuzene, who may be said to have belonged to that "mob of monks" whom Selden is constantly citing.

In discussing a tale about Robert, where Polydore

Vergil differs somewhat from "the common monks," Selden again takes up the subject of abjuration of the realm. He declares it to be an obsolete law, which seems to have had its beginning from the time of the Confessor. "Bracton" is here cited as an authority; who in turn follows Roger Hoveden, and also Glanville, and John le Breton. There are discrepancies between them on this subject; and when Matthew Paris and others are added, resolution of the question is difficult, reconciliation of statements impossible. It cannot be made out from the tales in the monks whether the Forty Days were to be spent in sanctuary or were allowed as the period of the journey to the port and embarkation. Selden's precision is foiled by their vague talk.

Abjuration
of the
Realm.

The Story of the Interdict laid upon the kingdom in the time of King John, and his submission to the Pope, leads Selden to offer some apology for that monkishly maligned king. John was the victim, he thinks, of papal usurpation, the active agent in which was Stephen Langton. The clergy treacherously conspired against his crown; and Selden appears to credit the tale that John sent ambassadors to "Amiramully king of Morocco" for the Mohamedan religion. It was a wicked action; but poor John Lackland was maddened by the persecution he endured from the Christian hierarchy. Langton is no sooner installed than in a Council he stirs up the Barons against John, produces the old Charter of Liberties granted by Henry I. and containing St. Edward's Laws, amended by the Conqueror, and provokes the Barons to demand observance of the same from the king as an absolute duty to subjects of a free state. Armies were mustered to extort these liberties, and at length, by

Apology
for King
John.

treaty in Runningmede near Staines, John gave Two Charters, the one of liberties general, the other of the Forest. These Charters were nearly the same as what were called in the time of King James "the Grand Charter" and "the Charter of the Forest." The Pope confirmed the Charters ; but the same year, on learning what injuries the see of Rome had suffered from these liberties, sent a Bull cursing in thunder all who maintained those Charters. Incurable broils were thus bred between king and subject, the guilt of which Selden, using a strong phrase of reproach, lays at the door of the Pope and his archbishop. Now they excited the subjects by censures of the prince, now they abetted the king in his betrayal of the popular liberties, on pretence of "an universal interceding authority."

Selden is here, it may be observed in reality making a strong attack upon the policy of the Catholic priesthood of the age. It is not surprising that he, living in the midst of the restless intrigues of Jesuits and Seminarists, should have recognized a verisimilitude in the tales about Innocent and King John. It would perhaps have been surprising had he detected the fact that the monkish annalists had been writing these fables as allegories, partly conscious and partly unconscious, of the mind and policy of the Church in their own time. The monks were friends or enemies of the popular or of the royal interest, as it suited the design of the moment. They were, in their own reported confessions, the turbulent faction in every land.

It may perhaps be thought that Selden was somewhat near-sighted ; so keen is he in the detection of inconsistencies in the monkish tales, so dull to their significance as representing the mind of a corporation or of what he designates a Mob of Monks. But, as he

himself in effect observes in his "Table Talk," the "Popish books" must be used, otherwise no English history is attainable. And the contents of the "Popish books" corresponded closely to the activity and ambition of the Papal faction in his contemporary world. They were in one sense probable tales, however improbable in their details. Therefore Selden could believe that liberties granted by King John were by King John repealed, were confirmed in the infancy of Henry III., who, when he arrived at maturity, cancels all the Charters of the Forest, repeals the rest, and makes his subjects buy at the price of great sums, rated by the Chief Justice, Hugh de Bouch, the renewal of their liberties. He could believe that the intestine troubles of the kingdom began again; the barons demanding the restoration of the cancelled charters of Oxford, until the king once more with full parliament grants again their desired freedom.

Again Selden accuses not the King, but "*the ill counsel of alien caterpillars crawling about him, being as scourges then sent over into this kingdom.*" And here he cites the rhymed Chronicle of "Robert of Gloucester," who depicts the misery of kindly Englishmen, and how the barons gained the expulsion of the French, and the grant of

"good laws and the Old Charter also
That so oft was igranted er, and so oft undo."

We are also referred to the Benedictines, Matthew Paris, and William Rishanger, with the remark that these so controverted Charters had no settled surety until Edward I., since whose time they have been "more than thirty times in Parliament confirmed." But Edward Longshanks, the English Justinian, is

himself a conversion of the mythologists of the Constitution. In the same note we are informed, on the authority of Hector Boece, that Edward brought the Coronation Stone, a highly fantastic object in the Scottish stories, to Westminster, after his Northern wars : about which Dean Stanley's "Memorials" may be consulted.

In discussing the wars of the York and Lancaster faction, Selden contradicts as false and absurd the opinion of Polydore that the root of the Lancastrian title was in Edmund, eldest son of Henry III., who was deprived of the throne on the ground of his deformity. Matthew Paris, he adds, who is better authority than most of the monks, and who was the king's chronologer of those times, expressly gives the dates of their births, and says that "the Crookback was four years younger than his brother Edward." Had Selden considered that the work of Matthew Paris was not yet known in Polydore's time, he would not have censured the Italian scholar ; he would rather have denounced the circumstantial invention of the Benedictine monk. Yet a little further on, Selden points out that in both the printed Chronicles of Matthew Paris against the year 1086, Stephen earl of Blois is described as earl of Bec, and that he is made son of Tedbald earl of Blois, who was in fact his brother.

Selden accepts the theory of the happy union of the Two Roses in the persons of Henry earl of Richmond and Elizabeth of York. He accepts the conventional characters of Edward IV. and Richard III. He discusses the question why George duke of Clarence was put to death. One theory was that a prophecy foretold Edward's successor's name should

On the
legend of
the Roses.

begin with *G*, and parallels to this are found in the monk of St. Basil, "Nicetas Choniates," in his tales of Alexis and Manuel. Selden alludes to the serious but insufficient charges laid against George in the Chronicles of Polydore, Hall, and the rest of that crew. But he himself has a theory about the mode of his death by drowning in a hogshead of malmsey. He cites one F. Matenesius, professor of history and Greek at Cologne, who in a work on drinking customs describes a class of drunkards who would like to be turned into whales provided the sea might be turned into most generous wine. Such a one was George Earl of Clarence, who, on his own condemnation, chose to be drowned in malmsey.

Selden's criticism on this story is, first that there never was such a title as Earl of Clarence, though there had been Earls of Clare in The Earl of Clarence. Suffolk, according to Polydore and Camden. That earldom was converted into a dukedom by the creation of Lionel, second son of Edward III., duke of Clarence, since whom there have been none but dukes of that title. Secondly, Selden thinks it an inexcusable injury to the dead prince to tell such a tale of him, because our English stories make his death a tyrannous murder, without any such election of the mode of death. Why did not Matenesius give his authority in the margin? But it does not occur to Selden to ask for the authority of an eye-witness for the tale of the death of the duke in so singular a manner. It seems that Matenesius endeavoured to give a touch of probability to an otherwise absurd tale.

Selden notes that the name "Plantagenet" came to an end with Margaret, countess of Salisbury and daughter of George of Clarence. The rise of the

Tyddour (or Tudor) name is, as usual, traced to Owen, descendant of the British Cadwallader, who wedded queen Catherine dowager of Henry V. Their son was Edmund of Hallam, created earl of Richmond by Henry VI., who wedded Margaret daughter of John first duke of Somerset, and son of John of Gaunt by Catherine Swynford. Neither Selden nor Bacon had any genuine materials out of which to frame any exact representation of Henry VII. or his times. Those times were to them ancient, more ancient, it may be said, owing to the illusions of art, than the times of the Normans.

One would have supposed that Selden as a school-boy had learned by heart the dates of the accession of the English kings from William the Conqueror. But it was not so. Towards the end of this note he is good enough, in order to "ease the reader's conceit of the kings here sung" in Drayton to add a chronology of them from William to Elizabeth. It is one of many signs that the poetic imaginary retrospect of England's kings from the Norman epoch, which has so long passed for historic truth, was beginning to be fixed, and the gradual subsidence of the turbid fables of Brute the Trojan and the British kings. He gives other Catalogues of Kings in his notes.

In the eighteenth Song of the "Polyolbion" the Muse inspires the poet with the praises of the men of Kent, the home of English freedom according to the legend. The land is thus apostrophised—

On the
Liberties
of Kent.

"O noble Kent, quoth he, this praise doth thee belong,
The hard'st to be controll'd, impatientest of wrong,
Who, when the Norman first with pride and honor sway'd,
Threw'st off the servile yoke upon the English laid ;

And with a high resolve, most bravely didst restore
That liberty so long enjoy'd by thee before.
Not suffering foreign laws should thy free customs bind,
Thou only shew'd thyself of the ancient Saxon kind.
Of all the English shires be thou surnamed the free
And foremost ever plac'd when they shall reckon'd be.
And let this town, which chief of thy rich county is,
Of all the British sees be still Metropolis."

Selden illustrates this passage by citing "an old monk," an Augustinian of Canterbury, who writes under the name of Thomas Spot, and who tells how archbishop Stigand and abbot Egelsin as chiefs of the Shire assembled all the country against Duke William in defence of their liberties. For there had been hitherto no villeins in England, and the Norman threatened all with servitude. They met at Swanes-court, took boughs in their hands and went forth to meet duke William, offering him either submission on condition of the enjoyment of their ancient liberties, or instant war. William acceded to their demand, and the Kentish men conducted him to Rochester and delivered to him the county and the castle of Dover. Selden has doubts of this fine story, and indeed it was probably not written down so much as a century before his time. It is one of the obvious attempts made by churchmen in the Tudor time to represent the Hierarchy as in sympathy with the popular cause. Selden's criticism, however, is that Spot is assigned to the time of Edward I., and had no authority for his tale, and again that he was clearly guilty of falsehood in pretending that there was no villeinage in England before the Norman time. The Laws of Ina and of the Confessor recognize it. Selden points out further evidences in the monkish writings, of desire to claim peculiar privileges for Kent.

While still quite a young man, Selden published his "Titles of Honour," 1614, wherein he seeks to trace out the origin of Kingship and of noble titles. He begins with Adam as the first king, and amasses a quantity of material, necessarily derived in the main from the Benedictine sources. The work is of value because it reminds us that the upper classes were still in the reign of James I. ignorant of their origin, unable to trace their families with any certainty beyond the now ancient time of Henry Tudor. In 1616

On the Law Commentaries. he produced his notes on the legal tracts which bear the name of Fortescue and of Hengham. This also was symptomatic of the time.

There was a powerful Fortescue family at that time; but as for any Sir John Fortescue, Chancellor in the time of Henry VI., neither Selden nor any preceding scholar had any authentic particulars concerning him. Leland knew him not, it is the lax Bale and Pits who first begin to spread abroad his fame. And the name of Hengham, decorating the reign of the English Justinian, belongs to the scheme of the Succession of Chief Justices. Selden was a careful collector and collator of MSS.; but strong suspicion as to the date and genuineness of MSS. does not appear to have entered his mind.

Next year appeared his treatise on the Syrian Gods, which was intended to illustrate the passages in the Old Testament which allude to the idols of the Gentiles. Selden takes a wide sweep in this still valuable survey of religious ideas and rites; and had it occurred to him to investigate the origin of the Hebrew Scriptures and their relation to the Koran, he might have produced an intellectual revolution. In one respect indeed he struck out a path which scholars might have followed up to

important issues. He cited the writings of the Rabbins, who were the only proper commentators on the Old Testament. True, they wrote romantic stories by way of comments, but their stories were the clue to the actual state of the Hebrew imagination at the time the Law and the Prophets were written. Le Clerc complained of Selden for using the mediæval Rabbins; but had the passions and beliefs of our scholars allowed them calmly to examine the question of the relation between the Jewish clergy and their sacred books, we should have been spared an enormous waste of labour. There are many curious things in this work, read in the light of the present day. But in a state of thought to which Adam presented himself as the first king, and Seth as the first mathematician, no scholar knew of a distinction between ancient and mediæval lore.

However, Selden was aware that the time when the Jews first came into England was uncertain. He saw by the reputed "Laws of Edward the Confessor" that they had merely the rights of king's men. Perhaps he did not doubt the horrible tales of their practice of crucifying boys at Easter: an invention designed to support the great Church theory of the relation of the Jews to the Drama of the Passion. He repeats these tales in his tract in Purchas' "Pilgrimage." Unless a scholar lived among the Jews on terms of confidence and friendship—and few were there of the persecuted race in England at the time—he could not be aware how utterly repugnant was the bare idea of such atrocities to their religious sentiments.

In 1618 Selden came forward as the critic of the "divine right" of Tithes, and drew upon himself a storm of reproach from ignorant and interested men among the clergy. Neither the king

nor the bishops could endure calm reasoning on such a subject, if it gave any handle to Presbyterians or other rivals of the Church. Selden also questioned the traditional date of the Birthday of the Lord on December 25th. For these offences he was summoned before the High Commission Court; and according to an Act of that tribunal, dated 28th January, 1618, he appeared personally and made his submission in his own handwriting. His fellow antiquary Lancelot Andrewes, bishop of Winton, who alone is said to have approved the book among the bishops, was a member of that Court. Such is the tale.

On the other hand, Selden is quoted as having denied that he ever appeared before that Court, although to certain Lords of the High Commission he had expressed regret for having written the book. His antagonist accused him of prevarication, and there was the usual petty attempt to make Selden out a mere rummager of Cotton's Library and copier of MSS. The whole reminiscence shows with what difficulty an able scholar laboured who desired to tell the truth upon any subject connected with the interests of the oligarchy. The reader will find an allusion to the subject in the "Table Talk."

About three years later, Selden is sent to prison for having dared to dispute the proposition of King James, that the privileges of Parliament were originally grants from the Crown, and for joining in the protest of the House of Commons. What can be thought of the "Constitution" when it is reported that James in his rage tore this document out of the journals with his own hand? After five weeks in prison, "poor Mr. Selden" has to set in motion the machinery of Court favouritism to obtain his release. Lancelot Andrewes

had, in all probability, something to do with it. Henceforth, it seems, Selden became a "State Puritan," a very different thing from a Church Puritan. For the admirable sense of Selden revolted from the conceit and folly of that party.

During his imprisonment, Selden was busy with his edition of the monk Eadmer, published 1623 Edition of Eadmer. with a dedication to Bishop Williams, the Lord Keeper, who had aided in his release. Here again we have an illustration of the want of critical spirit, or of the blind belief in the self-testimony of parchments. The Benedictine, who secured a purchaser for his trash in Selden, pretends that he was an eye-witness of events from 1066-1122. A miserable reading of the Laws of the Conqueror is produced, destined to be improved upon by Spelman and later scholars, down to Wilkins. So ineradicable had the Norman Dogma become at this time.

Another remarkable evidence of the absence of all settled principles of public right in England, is the incident of the Sibthorp sermon. After the dissolution of the Parliament of 1626, the Court meditates imposing a Loan in virtue of the king's prerogative. Dr. Sibthorp preaches a sermon in defence of it; and the Bishop of London's chaplain signs an *imprimatur*, not, as it seems, without misgivings. He sends it to Selden; and Selden, not caring to give his opinion in writing, sends for the chaplain and tells him that the book strikes at the foundation of property, and that should a change of times come, the chaplain will be hanged for his *imprimatur*. The chaplain in a fright erased his name, and the sermon was not published till some two years later. The case of Hampden was to show clearly that the menace against the rights of property on the part of

the Court roused good Englishmen into a desperate struggle to obtain a Constitution.

We see Selden in 1627 pleading in the King's Bench as Counsel for Hampden: one of the earliest occasions on which a lawyer was heard to refer to Magna Carta. And how? The document was but recently known; its provisions had never been observed. Were Chapter XXIX. fully executed, as it ought to be (says Selden), every man would enjoy his liberty better than he does. What does the text say? That no free man shall be imprisoned without due process of law. What does the phrase "according to the law of the land" mean? Either presentment or indictment, answers Selden. Otherwise the freeman would have no privilege above the villein; who might be imprisoned by his lord, but not by another than his lord, unless at the risk of an action of false imprisonment. In truth, the name of Selden links the Charter with the Petition of Right as productions of one period of our national life. The dreams of the Charter perhaps aided Selden to the realization of the Petition of Right.

In the course of subsequent discussions, rays of light often break upon that stealth in the midst of which precedents for wrong-doing were invented and enrolled. On April 2, 1627, Selden is said to have spoken in the House on the question of confinement of men to their houses at Christmas by proclamation. He declares it to be contrary to law. He cites "Bracton," believing his treatise to be ancient. He makes the noteworthy observation that to understand the question we should "compare ourselves to villeins." He cites a statute dated in the time of Henry VI. by which a *villain regardant* must not be out of his lord's manor. The Domesday Book, on the other hand, defines a free

man as one who can go where he pleases. The Jews were confined to their Jewries. But "English confinement" followed upon judgments in court. The debate ended with an order of the House that no person should be confined in his house or elsewhere. How happy must the ideal days of the Domesday Book and of King John have appeared to our Members of Parliament in the time of James and Charles!

On the question of levying military force, Selden goes back to William the Conqueror and the later kings for support to his arguments against pressing and compulsory service out of the kingdom; and on April 7 he made a long speech in favour of Liberty on the ground of precedents and legal decisions. If these literary precedents were questioned, what proofs of argument could there be against the encroachments of the oligarchy? At last both sides were wearied of the talk of popular liberties, and sharpened the sword in preparation for a trial of strength. Still, these arguments, coming from one of the most book-learned men in the kingdom, no doubt made a considerable impression upon the minds of those who had been taught to lean more on parchments than on their native sense of right and wrong, or on unwritten Custom.

On this occasion some one reported that the Earl of Suffolk had said Selden ought to be hanged for erasing public documents and promoting sedition. It was always easier to suspect and to prove the erasure than the forgery of a text. And a charge of this kind is one of many incidental proofs that there was an uncertain feeling about the Records which men did not care to probe to the bottom. But we can feel with Selden in his indignant reply as given by Wilkins. He said, "I hope no man believes I ever did it. I cannot guess

what the lord means. I did deliver in whole copies of divers records, examined by myself, and divers other gentlemen of this house. These I delivered into the Lord's House, and the Clerk of the Crown brought in the records of the Office before the Lords. I desire that it may be a message from this House to the Lords at the Bar, to make out a charge against the lord that spoke this, and I hope we shall have justice." But the words were denied by the Earl.

In listening to the debates in the Parliament we feel that we are acquiring much knowledge of the true English history. For example, on May 16 a Bill was brought forward for restraining tumultuous preaching. Sir Henry Martyn, in defending the privileges of the clergy, went back to Magna Carta for those privileges. We do not read that any member rose and observed that "it was a long time ago and a great many things had happened since then." No; to men taught as boys to believe in Brute the Trojan, the thirteenth century seemed perhaps quite a modern time. But Selden said that the Church had many liberties, yet that they had been lessened by many acts of parliament. Since the 2nd Henry VIII., for example, the clergy had been wholly subject to lay jurisdiction.

On May 21, the debate was on a clause added by Bishop Williams to the Petition of Right, "saving the King's sovereignty." Selden argued that such a clause was unprecedented. True, there was such a clause in French in the Forest Charter and the Confirmation under Edward I. of the Great Charter, *savant le droit et signory*. But the original Roll was not extant. The clause, he said, was a later insertion, and there was no Parliament Roll of the year. He adduces a Benedictine MS. which has the obnoxious words in Latin "saving

the Crown right of the King." And the Chronicle ran, that the people, on hearing of the added clause, broke into execrations, and that the king and nobles cleared it at the next Parliament. "But there was no confirmatory Roll of that time, and so on. This is not the only case where the Rolls accessible to politicians under the Stuarts taught allegorical lessons in current politics.

During the debate on Tonnage and Poundage of the same year, Selden replied to the argument of the King's Counsel that it had been granted "time out of mind" to the King. "I fear," said Selden, "his Majesty is told so." But it was far from the truth. He refers to the statutes 1 Elizabeth and 1 James, and shows that "time out of mind" meant the time of Henry VII. and other progenitors of the Royal House: a time which, in fact, Francis Bacon regarded as "ancient." Subsidies, indeed, the King always had; and in that sense it was "time out of mind." The incident shows what loose talk prevailed on these subjects.

After the memorable scene in the House of Commons, when the Speaker was held in his chair while the protest of the Commons was being read, Selden in the Tower. March, 1628, Selden was committed to the Tower and his study was sealed up. His offence was said to be contempt of the King and the Government, and seditious conduct. After eight months' confinement, he and his companions were threatened with eight years by the Chief Justice, if they did not submit. Selden refused to give security for his good behaviour, as illegal; and was in Hilary term 1629 removed to the King's Bench prison in pursuance of his own suit. He remained here a year, with the liberty of going abroad in the daytime. During this period he wrote a work

on Hebrew legislation, dedicated to Laud, whose library had been of service to him.

Here Selden takes up the intermediate position between those who blindly submit to the Roman Church, and those who rashly think they can understand the Scriptures by the light of nature, without regard to the Church histories, the Fathers, and the Councils. He appeared plainly to perceive that the references to Jewish high priests in the New Testament in reality veiled the institutions of the Synagogue. Had he pushed the point a little further, he might have discovered that the Pontificate of the Hebrews with its ideal Succession was the mediæval dream of the Jewish Churchmen of the time of Maimonides. It was then that the Rabbis began to talk of Princes and Fathers of the Synagogue, and they were followed by the Benedictines in the composition of the Book of the Gospels, and of Josephus.

To return from the study to the political world. This same year Selden was prosecuted in the Star Chamber for having taken part in the dissemination of a libel called a "Proposition for his Majesty's Service, to bridle the impertinence of Parliaments." There are variant accounts of this affair; but this much is clear, that the Court suspected several distinguished men, especially Sir Robert Cotton, the Earls of Bedford and Clare, Oliver St. John and Selden, of having fomented the spirit of sedition by encouraging the notion that there was a plot in high places against the liberties of the people, similar to that afterwards associated with the name of Strafford. The story of Foulis (writing about 1674) is that the tract in question had been written in 1613 by Sir Robert Dudley at Florence. Whatever the truth of the details may

De Successionibus
in Bona Defuncti, etc.

have been, the most convincing proof of the idleness of all the talk about the Great Charter and the liberties of the subject lies in the fact of the despotic treatment of the foremost literary men in the kingdom—Selden, Cotton, and others.

We learn that Selden was removed to the Gate House at Westminster, May 30, 1630, and that he was at liberty to pass the Long Vacation at Wrest. Next Michaelmas term his *Habeas Corpus* was again refused, the Court reprimands the Marshal of the King's Bench prison because he had released his prisoner without a *breve* from them. The judges also called the Lord Treasurer, who had removed Selden, to account for his conduct, and a writ was made out for removing him to the King's Bench prison. In May, 1631, he was admitted to bail, which was renewed from term to term, until he was finally freed in 1634.

To this period belong his other writings on Hebrew antiquities. Here again, he showed his appreciation of the Rabbinical learning. He laid stress upon what the Rabbins practically called "the Seven Noachic precepts," a knowledge of which is evinced in the canonical Acts of the Apostles. But he missed the opportunity of ascertaining when that so-called "Tradition" was first heard of in our world. The determination of the point would have been the determination of the approximate date of the New Testament writings, and the relation of the Writers to the Rabbins. Whenever learning shall revive in England, our scholars may yet find in the material accumulated by Selden, and his contemporaries Lightfoot and Pococke, a precious fund of instruction on these and kindred matters.

Passing over the next few years of Selden's life as a politician, which appear to reflect the highest credit

on his patriotism, we come to the year 1642, when he printed a tract on "Ecclesiastical History." Under the name of "Euty chius, orthodox patriarch of Alexandria," an Arabic writing had recently become known to a very few of the learned in the West. Selden too rashly publishes a passage from this book with notes, believing in its authenticity, as he believed in the authenticity of the "History of Bede." He believed also in the imaginary archives of a Church at Alexandria in the tenth century, the stated time of this Euty chius. He never questioned Erpenius, who gave him the MS., as to how it came into his hands. Such doubts were foreign to the time. Yet these monkish "Annals" had probably been forged near to his own time by a writer whose mind is full of dishonesty and absurdity. The whole work was published by Pococke in 1658. That scholar published the "History of Abulfaragius," which is a production of the same confederacy of primitive monks in the interests of the theory of Church antiquity in the East. But so far was that theory from being fixed at the time this Euty chius was compiled, he places Origen in the time of the emperor Justinian.

It is interesting to call up (by the aid of Whitelocke) the picture of Selden sitting in the Westminster Assembly of Divines, 1644, and correcting the clergymen who quoted from their pocket bibles, by referring them to the Hebrew or the Greek text. His lectures on Rabbinical lore must have been a revelation to most of them. But when he called in Maimonides and the Talmud to illustrate the Acts of the Apostles, he could not explain that both the one and the other class of writings belonged to the sphere of poetic art, and that the reason of their correspondence was that they were composed at near the same time. Had he been able to see this,

and to state it, he would no doubt have been "cried down," in spite of all his scholarly ascendancy. Still more so, if he had told them that the canonical pictures in the Acts were conceived in the monasteries to represent the early Christians as a sect of Jews in Jerusalem, living the true Cœnobite life. This year he published a tract on the "Civil Year and the Jewish Calendars;" but he did not ascertain at what time the Jews began to have a Calendar.

This year also Selden was appointed by Parliament Keeper of the Records in the Tower. In what state did he find them, and of what value were they? To that question no direct answer is forthcoming. The same year also Laud was attainted, and his endowment of the Arabic lecture to which Poccoke had been appointed was seized. Selden interfered, but it was not till three years later that the endowment was restored to Poccoke. It is a convenient place to refer to that scholar.

He was of Magdalen Hall and Corpus Christi. He had been chaplain to the English factory at Aleppo, 1630. He found the Jewish Rabbins ^{Poccoke.} there illiterate; but under a Mohammedan scholar he made great way in Arabic. We find a most pleasing representation of the love borne him by Phatallah his master, who on his death-bed, in the year 1670, told an Englishman he doubted not he should meet Poccoke in Paradise under the banner of Isa. A letter couched in the true Oriental style from his dervise Ahmed is also extant. Laud wrote to him in 1631 for Greek coins and MSS. As for Greek MSS., they were not forthcoming; an incidental piece of evidence that the mass of Greek MSS. were not to be found in the East, as scholars had vainly supposed. When Poccoke came

home in 1636, he must have entertained very different views of the Mohammedans from those so long nourished by ecclesiastical prejudice. He opens his lectures with a discourse on Arabian poetry.

Next year, he visited Constantinople. Here he succeeded in finding some learned Jews; and the patriarch Cyril gave him some account of the books at Mount Athos. However, Pococke did not explore that literary centre of the monks of St. Basil. There was a dark tale current that the patriarch, an enemy to the Roman and a friend to the Anglican Church, had been assassinated at the instigation of the Jesuits. There are other particulars in the memorials of Pococke which hint of sympathy between the Greek patriarch and the Anglican clergy, and on the other hand of intense antipathy on the part of the Roman clergy both to the Mohammedans and to the Greek Church.

In 1640 Pococke returned home, calling on his way upon Grotius at Paris, whose treatise on Christian evidences he had either translated or intended to translate into Arabic. He told Grotius that the Mohammedans had been misrepresented in his treatise; and Grotius—as we may readily believe—frankly submitted to correction. Pococke on arriving at London found his friend and patron Laud in the Tower, and all hopes of liberal culture for the time extinguished in England by the passions of bigots and fools. The first Orientalist in Europe came unto his own, and his own received him not. In 1643, he received the living of Childrey in Berks from his college, and thither he retired from Oxford, which had become noisy with the drum and the clash of arms. There was no leisure for attention to Arabic in the following years, during which his endowment was seized and again restored.

He became Hebrew professor at Oxford in 1648, and in 1649 published his "Specimen Historiæ Arabum," wherein, without going to the heart of the subject, he did something to clear the Mohammedans from misrepresentation.

But the poor scholar, not being of the politics of the ruling party, was greatly harassed during these years, and all but turned out of Oxford and of Childrey. Dr. John Owen, the Independent, did himself honour by interfering on Poccocke's behalf. In 1655 he published his "Porta Mosis," in 1658 the "Annals of Euty chius" already referred to. The restoration brought him back to Oxford, but all interest in Oriental studies languished during the last thirty years of his life. He died in 1691.

The name of Poccocke, then, is a landmark. It reminds of a time in the history of English and Western culture when first it was possible to understand the Mohammedans and to do them justice for long current calumnies. And, alas! owing to the barbarism and absurdity to which the Church teaching had reduced the imagination of the world, the opportunity was lost. From the Roman and the Anglican clergy down to the besotted Puritan fanatics who would have driven Poccocke out of his living because he had not "the spirit," what furious clamours would have been raised against the man who dared to assert openly that the Mohammedans were as sincere as the Christians and believed still more profoundly in their Gospel. John Bunyan mentions that such a notion had occurred to him; but it was a "temptation." Passion blinded English scholars then and has blinded them ever since to the truth about the Arabian, the Jewish, and the Catholic literature, which will be found by the

attentive reader unconsciously expressed in the works of Pococke.*

The points on which I am touching are amongst the most curious in the history of culture. Pococke may be cited as one of the first scholars who was aware of the extraordinary wealth and power of the Arabic language. He knew also that the early Rabbins were the pupils of the Arabians, that they referred to them in every difficulty, that they clothed Arabian ideas in a new dialect. He knew that the Old Testament could not be understood without Arabic, nor the Jews apart from the Mohammedans. Did he perceive that the Jews were a sect from the Muslim and that the Bible teaches as much? That the Bible in both parts was a disguised Arabian tradition? Perhaps not. But at least he had seen the great object of the scholar's research from both sides. He had viewed Islam with the eyes of the Churchman, and the Church with the eyes of Moslem. Until his countrymen follow him, absurdity will still reign in the schools of England.

At the same time John Lightfoot was labouring with deep enthusiasm at Cambridge in Rabbinical lore, and publishing his works in the face of every discouragement from the ignorant conceit of the enthusiasts and the indifference of the general public. His Commentaries on the New Testament still remain perhaps the most valuable that have been written by an Englishman. His favourite principle that the New Testament was written by Jews, among Jews and for Jews, taken with certain qualifications leads to the heart of the truth, provided it be once seen that the book must be referred to "the splendid period of Judaism."

* Cf. also the story of Prideaux and his "Life of Mahomet."

But to return to Selden. In 1647 he published the Commentary on English Law which bears the name of *Fleta*—as Selden supposed—in allusion to the author's writing in the Fleet prison. He had but *one* and the only MS. of this writer, he referred it back to the thirteenth century, although the internal evidence shows it to proceed from the same confederacy of writers who had produced Bracton and Thornton, and the Year Books also pretended to be of the thirteenth century. He continued his Hebrew studies, and in 1650 printed part of his book on the Sanhedrin. It has been thought a strange thing that he should have spoken of the Jewish Courts as assembling “before Moses.” Yet this was allegorically true, were it understood that the Rabbins were describing under personal forms and referring to distant times the institutions founded in Spain and Egypt. In 1652, he wrote a preface to the *Decem Scriptores Anglicani*, in other words the Ten Benedictines who were good enough to invent English history for us. So little did he understand their system, he thought that the monk Simeon did not write the “History of the Church of Durham,” but that it was the Prior who wrote it, named Tergotus. He did not observe that the monks had a variety of masks at their disposal. The great “Explorator” of mediæval literature, being himself an independent writer of the highest worth, never to the last suspected that the writers whom he edited wrought on an utterly different system from his own. Selden died in the White Friars in 1654 at the age of seventy.

The Ten
English
writers.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE written at much greater length than I intended, yet withhold my pen from many observations which might be of interest, on various parts of the subject. I hope that in these matters "the half is more than the whole;" and that intelligent readers will prefer a suggestive rather than an exhaustive treatment of the subject. Indeed, I shrink from the task of draining the wells of fiction dry, in order to discover what truth may be lurking at the bottom. I set out with the intention of showing to my readers that English Story is a branch of Church Story, and that it rests not on the testimonies of witnesses who were living in the times of which they profess to relate, but on the dreams and theories of Church artists, who were sitting down to their work at an epoch much nearer to our own than we are wont to suppose.

In my work on "The Rise of Christendom" I laboured to ascertain and offer to my readers positive results, feeling, in common with many, that we have had enough of what is called "negative criticism;" and that if one could not write to affirm the positive Truth as it stands in Letters, it were perhaps better not to write at all. I showed that our civilization was to be

traced in Europe to the great Corporations,—namely, the Roman Empire, the Mohammedan Empire, the Jewish and Christian corporation of Teachers. I pointed out that the relation in time of these different bodies had been hitherto falsely represented in ignorant days, by the founders of the Christian empire. The Jews as a people of literary culture are European; and there is no reason to suppose that they would have established that culture in Spain, had it not been for the invasion of their kinsmen the Arabs, and the immense influence once possessed by the Mohammedans alike in East and West. With regard to Chronology, I was forced to lean heavily upon the date assigned to Maimonides, not at the time suspecting that this date might be a convention rather than a registered fact. Let me leave the question open, let me refer it to the decision of Jewish experts in their own literature. I merely name the point to show that I was by no means rash when I referred the beginnings of Jewish literature to so late a date; and that if I retract my conclusions, it cannot be in a conservative direction.

It has been a great relief to me to find myself in the present work on common ground with previous historians. We all look back upon the Revival or Resurrection of Letters,—so it is sometimes called,—as a great turning-point in culture. But we need to understand what we mean by these strong figures of speech. A Resurrection implies a previous entombment of Letters, and we have too carelessly accepted that idea. That a Christian Literature, however, dating its rise from some 1300 or 1400 years before the Revival was to be found in the Monasteries at the epoch of Printing and Publication is an utterly false

proposition. Everything, on the contrary, was beginning; and our sole hope of illuminating any higher period must be by rays of conjecture cast from the standpoint of that time.

I have desired to be useful to professional students by pointing out that special researches must be comparatively futile and useless, unless we know the right point at which to begin. We admire the extraordinary industry of German scholars; and yet that industry has been relatively misapplied in historic science, because they have begun at ideal epochs when their land was wrapped in darkness like our own. To the general reader I have endeavoured to render as faithful a report as I could of what is really meant by History; and of how this branch of art took its rise at the close of a long period of barbarism. There is in reality only one way of understanding these matters, and that the right way. So far from having led the reader on bye-paths of learning, I have pointed out to him how he may regain the high-road of knowledge, and pursue it up to a point where the darkness closes around him.

I have hoped to assist some good men through clearer knowledge of the Past, toward better endeavours for the future. It is true that Self-Interest is the mainspring of human life; and how often I have recalled in the course of these studies the saying of La Rochefoucauld, that "whatever discoveries we have made in the territory of Love Proper, there remain still many unknown lands." Our social institutions repose on the architecture of Self-interest, foundations so thickly laid that they may deceive the eye, and pass for the granite rock itself. Yet Society is ever crumbling, and by the action of the same force. To multiply

self-interests, is to deprive any one of its ascendancy ; is gradually to melt all into one truly catholic or universal interest. There is not one of us who is not more interested in his own welfare than in the knowledge of the Truth ; but it must be an immense gain to the commonweal if we can succeed in uniting love-proper with the love of the Truth.

Does the reader mockingly inquire, And what is Truth ? I answer there is a Truth in Letters and Science which stands fast, which needs to be more and more strictly defined with the increase of our experience of man and his world, but which cannot be overthrown. And with that Truth, the rival Truth which the Church has proclaimed during these four ages is utterly incompatible. Gradually the sense of this has dawned upon the minds of men, especially since the great schism between the Church and Science, signalized by the discovery of the Sphere, and again by the complete discoveries of Galileo, Bacon, and the knot of scholars perhaps sheltered beneath those great names, and their successors down to our own times. The clergy of our own day have ceased to denounce, and have learned to sit with reverence at the feet of the masters of physical science.

The Church must now abandon her claim to be the teacher of History, which is the science of Letters and of human nature. The more secular Truth has in this department more slowly come to light from various causes, which I hope have been sufficiently explained in the foregoing pages. It can now be known and told, and is of its nature as incapable of refutation as any accepted truth in physical science. I believe there is a growing feeling in the minds of many who are of our blood and language in America and the Colonies,

against the teaching of History as it has been hitherto conceived. They do not believe that the Church has told the Truth in the common and valuable acceptation ; and they are in the right. And how injurious to society to continue a system of education rooted in false opinions of life and human nature !

The question arises, If the religious organizations can no longer teach History, what can they teach that is profitable to mankind ? Morality ? But the purest morality of the Bible condemns them. Theology ? How can they teach a mystical Theology in neglect of History ? To a certain extent this may be done, and is done, but only among the most enthusiastic and ignorant of mankind. All that needs to be taught or can be taught of Theology falls to the province of the mere laymen. Men of Letters are acquainted with the theory and the history of the gods, as the devotees of the sects are not allowed to be. When the ecclesiastic says that men are created in the image of God, it is obvious that before he can say so, he has himself imagined God. And the truth stands fast, that it is men who have created the gods in their own image ; and have not always created them well.

The creed of the student of Letters is the old, gentle, all-tolerant creed of polytheism. He knows that all forms of the divine and the heroic have a value because they exist in thought, and are symbolic of the passions and aspirations of the human soul. But he will not be enslaved by any of them ; it is nothing but to grovel before the idol or ideal of our own creation. And never will men stand erect in proper dignity and self-respect, until they know that the world of ideas is their own creation, which it is their duty continually to revise, to reform, and to enrich by new additions.

They can contain all the gods and heroes in their own mind, and still find room for more.

I should know something of my own countrymen, and I believe it is no singular opinion that while the Englishman is capable of doing anything and understanding anything, the last thing he is expected to understand is this Church system of ideas which was forced upon him by those who had the mastery of Letters at a time when in that respect he was little better than a barbarian. He was overawed and overcome by the eloquence and adroitness of those who were his superiors in culture. No sooner did he acquire the instruments of learning, than he showed of what admirable intellectual things he was capable. He threatened to cast off the yoke that had been imposed upon him; but it was then too late. All that he could do he did, in protests against tyranny, and in the inventions of new sects and religions, which have troubled our sociality, and preserved our liberties. What is more needed is that the Englishman should probe the causes of his long spiritual ailments.

An education founded on the ancient and the modern Classics is a humane and a noble education. We should at this hour be a more intelligent, a more virtuous, or less hypocritical people, had our attention and our love been solely directed to these. But an education partly based on the Classics, partly on Jewish and semi-Jewish writings misunderstood, is a confused, a self-contradictory, a troubling education and never was suitable to the training of a freeborn Englishman. I cannot think that when the story of Letters is truly understood, the absurdities, the dishonesties and injuries of such a system of education will long continue. My dream for the future is the revolution of the present

religious bodies into a University of men of Letters and Science, of which some forecast has been given in the formation of non-ecclesiastical learned corporations in our own time; and which may include in Human Love all that can be known of the actual and the imaginary worlds. The prospect may be distant, but it is certain; because it cannot for ever be concealed from the general mind, that the pretensions to obtain knowledge about so-called supernatural things, by so-called supernatural channels, is, of its nature a fraudulent imposition on society.

I now leave my work to the candour and intelligence of the best audiences of my time. Although there are many things which fill the mind with pain and shame in contemplating the actual public life of England during these 400 years, there is on the other hand much to inspire us with hope for the future. How much of evil has been overcome by the exertion of a vigorous intelligence and courage among all classes of the people, how much more will be overcome, when our countrymen are better taught, see more clearly into the past, dispel their servilities and superstitions, acquire a juster confidence in themselves and a larger conception of their duty and destiny among the nations of the world. Let us turn from the dreams of the cell, the glowing visions of poet and playwright of a "past which never was present," and congratulate ourselves that this Victorian era is the clearest and most splendid that England has ever known. Let us cherish a boundless faith in the possibilities of a sound education: an education based on rectitude of thought, on that purer taste for fact as fact, and poetry as poetry, which is the love of Truth, and the canon of all that is good in morals. I have written with warm love to my native land, not

doubting that in spite of temporary obloquies, the truths I have endeavoured to cast abroad will spring up and bear fruit in the general conscience, to the greater good and glory of England, and the welfare of mankind.

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WRITINGS OF EDWIN JOHNSON, M.A.
INCLUDING TRANSLATIONS,
PUBLISHED AND UNPUBLISHED.

1877.

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Nicolas Udall. Literally printed from the Edition of 1564.

With Memoir of Erasmus by Edwin Johnson.

[*Boston.* R. Roberts.

1878.

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[2 vols. 8vo. *London.* Reeves & Turner.

Since reprinted in 3 vols., fep. 8vo.

1879.

“Observations on Hebrew Poetry.” [pp. 24. *Unprinted.*

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Testament.” Part IV., Epistle to the Romans, Vol. II.

Chapters IX. to XVI. translated by Edwin Johnson (pp. 109–392).

[*Edinburgh.* T. & T. Clark.

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1880-82.

"The Course of Religious Philosophy." [59 pp. *Unprinted.*

Review of Caird, "Intro. Philos. Religion," 1880. Pfeiderer, "Religious Philos auf Geschichtlicher Grunlage," 1878. E. Feller, "Vorträge und Abhandlungen." 2 vols. 1875. Lipsius, "Lehrbuch der Evangelisch Protestantischen Dogmatik." 2nd edition. 1879.

"The Reconstruction of Belief." [*Ditto.*

1. The Spheres of Faith and Belief; 2. Human Need of Faith; 3. Association of Faith and Belief; 4. Separability of Faith from Belief; 5. The Practical Mental Dependence on Faith or Belief; 6. Subordination of Belief to Faith; 7. The Progressive, Educational, and Provisional Character of all Belief; 8. Knowableness of Relations between God and Man; 9. The Test of the Value of Dogmas; 10. On the Essential Elements of Christianity.

"The Genesis of Religion in Eleven Chapters :"

1. General Notions of Religion; 2, 3, 4. Theories of the Genesis of Religion; 5. Revelation; 6. Lines of Direct Investigation—Language and Literature; 7. Literature; 8. Relations of the Mind to the Unknown; 9. Relations of the Mind to the Unknown—Aspects of Nature; 10. The Revelations of Art; 11. Poetry and Dancing.

"Religion; its Origin and Progress:" a Sketch of the Psychology and History of Religion. In Twenty Chapters.

[600 pp. *Unprinted.*

In this work were incorporated the three last-mentioned essays, re-written and welded into one comprehensive whole.

"The Emperor Julian."

[45 pp. *Unprinted.*

1882-83.

"Greek Mythology and Religion."

[*Ditto.*

Introduction—Elements of Greek Religion; Relation of Mind and Nature in Mythology; The Tomb, the Departed and their Fate; Religious Symbolical Myths (15 chapters); The Rise of Greek Polytheism. Tribal Relations and the Nature of the Gods—Hermes, Demeter, Apollo, Artemis, The Dioskouroi, Helios, Hera, Herakles, Athena, Hephaistos, Aphrodité, Arès, Zeus, Apollo, Dionysos, The Arakidi, Poseidon, Hades, Persephone. The Leleges; The Dioskouroi; Religion of the Leleges.

1884.

"In the Land of Marvels:" Folk-Tales from Austria and

VERNALEKEN (Theodor) In the LAND of MARVELS: FOLK-TALES from [LOWER] AUSTRIA and BOHEMIA, with PREFACE by E. JOHNSON, cr. 8vo. cl., t. e. g., with Sir Laurence Gomme's bookplate (o. p.), 6s

A very good collection. — *Sonnenschein*. The prefacer, E. JOHNSON, M.A., would seem not to be Edwin Johnson, M.A., of Hampstead, the *super-sceptic*, who believed the Bible and the whole of Classical literature to be a Clerical forgery of the early Renaissance.

Bohemia. By Theodor Vernaleken. Translated, with Preface and additional Notes, by Edwin Johnson, M.A.

[Cr. 8vo. pp. 363. London. Swan Sonnenschein, 1884.

An Illustrated edition issued in 1889.

A collection of sixty tales from Lower Austria and Bohemia, made by Professor Vernaleken, and published by him as a sort of supplement to the stories of the Brothers Grimm, which were derived mostly from North-Western Germany.

In these excursions into the land of marvels, Johnson found not only delightful stories for youthful readers, but some rich material for the study of the human spirit, and an opportunity for criticising some of the far-fetched ideas of modern mythologists.

1886-87.

“Antiqua Mater : ” a Study of Christian Origins.

“He had an earnest intention of taking a review of the original principles of the primitive Church : believing that every true Christian had no better means to settle his spirit, than that which was proposed to Æneas and his followers to be the end of their wanderings, *Antiquam exquirite Matrem.*”—“THE LIFE OF MR. A. COWLEY,” BY DR. SPRAT.

[Cr. 8vo., pp. xx., 308.

[London. Trübner & Co. ; now Williams & Norgate.

This work was written in answer to the inquiry, “*What may we learn—apart from the books of the New Testament—from the old Christian and the Græco-Roman literature of the second century, in respect to the origin and the earliest development of Christianity?*” Examining first External History, supposed references in Pliny the Younger, Tacitus, Suetonius, and in the writings ascribed to the “Apostolic Fathers,” and to “Justin Martyr,” he found no evidence that any historic founder or founders of a new religion were at the end of that period known. The theology of Jewish and Hellenic sectarians being examined in detail, it is shown that “Christianity” began with a theology, which was gradually converted into a history of past earthly events. In arriving at a negative result, the author further discovered that certain commonly alleged fabrications were the work of a much later age, and at once began to trace them downwards. The results of this search were afterwards embodied in “The Rise of Christendom.”

“De Voce ‘Αγιος.’” Motto : *φιλαλήθως.* [pp. 353. Unprinted.

1. De Sanctis ; 2. Sanctificatis et de sanctificatione ; 3. De Spiritu sancto ;
4. De Messia, Sancto Dei ; 5. De Ministris, dei Sanctis ; 6. De rebus sanctis vel sacris ; 7. De osculo sancto ; 8. De *οι ἅγιοι*, &c., in Apocalypsi ; 9. Conclusio.

An essay in Latin contributed to a Dutch Theological Society.

1889.

"The Rise of Christendom." [8vo., pp. xvi., 499.
[London. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd.; now
Williams & Norgate. 1890.

"Quis nescit primam esse historiæ legem ne quid falsi dicere audeat, deinde ne quid veri non audeat? ne quæ suspicio gratiæ sit in scribendo? ne quæ simultatis?"—Cicero, *de Or.*, ii. 15.

Contents—Prefatory note; Introduction; Object of the Inquiry; The Roman Church and Christendom; Glimpses of Mediæval Rome and Italy; Moral and Religious Teaching among the Romans; The Ethics of the Monasteries; The Traditions of the Mosque; The Rise of Hebrew Literature; The System of Church Literature; Early Forms of the Christian Legend; The Interpolations in the Literature of the Roman Empire; Summary and Conclusion; Index.

1890-92.

"The Prolegomena of Jean Hardouin." Translated, with Biographical Introduction, by Edwin Johnson, M.A. Prolegomena to a Censure of Old Writers by Jean Hardouin, Jesuit, from his Autograph. London: at the expense of P. Vaillant, 1766.
[Unprinted.

The only English Translation, it is believed, of Hardouin's work.

Miscellaneous Papers :

- "The Saxon Charters," 18 pp. Suggested by an article in the *Contemporary Review* by Mr. Freeman.
- "Socialism in Early English History," 9 pp.
- "The Master of the Rolls Series of English Historians," 23 pp.
- "British Origins," 27 pp. Suggested by obscure problems besetting the History of the English language and Institutions to German Scholars.
- "Construction and Record in English History," 14 pp. Suggested by an observation in a Lecture by Max Müller: "All the most ancient history is constructive rather than authentic—that is, founded on deductive rather than on contemporary evidence."
- "Foundation Legends of Oxford and Cambridge," 24 pp.
- "Baker's Chronicle," 17 pp.
- "The Paradox of English History;" "Tudor Historiography;" "Biblical Geography;" "Legends of Origin;" "Garden of Pleasure (Eden);" "The Deluge;" "Cursed (Dark) Peoples;" "Origin of Tongues;" "Cosmography;" "Moslem Geographers;" "Sacrobosco (Holywood) Cosmas Indicopleustes;" "Voyages of Discovery," &c.

* * * These papers formed the foundation of the work on "The Rise of English Culture."

"The Quest of Mr. East," by John Soane.

Nec vixit male, qui natus moriensque fefellit.—*Horace, Ep. 1, 17, 10.*

[1 vol. *London.* Constable, May, 1900.

"Gothic and Saracen Architecture."

[Vol. CXXXVI. *Westminster Review.*

"The Rise of English Culture." With a Brief Account of the Author and his Writings. [8vo., pp. 640.

[*London.* Williams & Norgate. 1904.

"Elements of Historic Science ; or, a Primer of History."

[171 pp. *Unprinted.*

CONTENTS : Persons—real, ideal, idealized ; Places, Times, State of Europe, 1490–1510 ; The Revival of Letters ; The Bible ; Knowledge the inverse of Belief ; Records ; Prejudice ; Testimony ; The Court of Letters ; Applied Criticism ; The Jews and their Literature ; Chaucer as Biblical Student ; Mystical terms not relevant in Historical Science ; The Jewish Sources ; Hebrew Letters ; Synagogue Rolls ; Dates of MSS. ; Rabbinical Interpreters ; The Talmud and the New Testament Writers ; The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela ; Josephus, etc.

* * * This work was undertaken at the suggestion of the late Mr. Froude.

1893–94.

"Gibbon on the Origin of Christendom," in *The Agnostic Journal*, June, 1893, to February, 1894.

"Eusebius' Church History." Ten Articles contributed to *The Freethinker*, August to November, 1893.

"Historical Notes." Unfinished Series in Watts's *Literary Guide*, August to November, 1893.

Introductory ; The New Biblical Criticism ; Jews and Romans ; Obadiah's Prophecy ; Sepharad ; The Jews in Spain.

"The True History of the Bible." [*The Agnostic Annual*, 1894.

"The Pauline Epistles, Re-studied and Explained."

[Cr. 8vo., pp. 152. *London.* Watts & Co., 1893.

Introduction—The Pauline Question in Relation to the Revival of Letters, Dean Colet, and the Beginnings of Literary Culture under the Tudors ;

Polydore Vergil on the-Origin of Christianity, on Chronology and Dates, the "Middle Ages;" the Beginnings of the Pauline Legend, Eusebius's Church History and the "List of Illustrious Men," Apostolic Succession; Paul the "Illustrious" and the Apostle of the Nations; Feast Days and the Pauline Epistles as seen in the Missal; Structure of the Pauline Epistles and the "Collations of Cassian;" Fabricated Testimonies of the "Illustrious" and of Apocryphal Writings to Paul; Jerome and Augustine, the "Hand-book of Cassiodorus," the Monasteries and Latin Writings; Leland on British Writers—Bede, Alcuin, Wiclif, and others; Editions of the Vulgate or Latin Bible, Jerome, the Complutensian Polyglott; Paul the Mouthpiece of Catholic Dogma—Regeneration, Justification, Matrimony; Luther, the Augustines and Paul; the Authors of "Verisimilia," 1886 (Professors Pierson and Naber), their analysis of the Epistles and remarkable coincidences with the Author in certain conclusions of his "Antiqua Mater," Author's Conclusion that the Pauline Epistles come to us from the Revival and the Lutheran Movement, the Scriptures and the Catholic Church grew together and present one Problem to the Inquirer; Paul as Hebrew Scholar, Hebrew Letters are Modern, and our Earliest Information about the Hebrew Books from Hebrews themselves is Sixteenth Century Information, The Sepher Juchasin or "Book of Families" attributed to Rabbi Zacuto, written about "A.D. 1502," the Tales of "Palestinian" and "Babylonian" Schools and of Spanish Schools of Hebrew Learning in the Eleventh or Twelfth Century, Richard Baxter on Faction and Fiction, Tillotson on Truth and Falschood. APPENDA: Polydore on "Inventions," Palæography and the Age of Manuscripts.

1894-95.

"The Rise of French Culture."

[*Incomplete.*]

"Chronology and other Papers:" Tabulated Extracts, Notes and References. Contributed to "The Mysteries of Chronology" by Mr. Arbuthnot, published in 1900.

LECTURES.

In addition to his principal works enumerated above, Johnson wrote four lectures on Robert Browning, three of which are to be found among the pages of the Browning Society:—

"Robert Browning."

Characteristic points in the personality and art of the Poet.

On "Bishop Blougram's Apology." Browning Papers, No. XIV., read at the 7th Meeting of the Browning Society.

“Conscience and Art in Browning.” I. The Poet of Conscience. II. Points of Art and Æsthetic. III. Religious Philosophy. Browning Papers, No. XVIII.

“Mr. Sludge, the Medium.” Browning Papers, No. XXIX., read at the 31st Meeting of the Browning Society.

Other lectures included :

“The Humorous Poems of Tennyson — The Northern Farmer.”

“Peter the Great.”

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